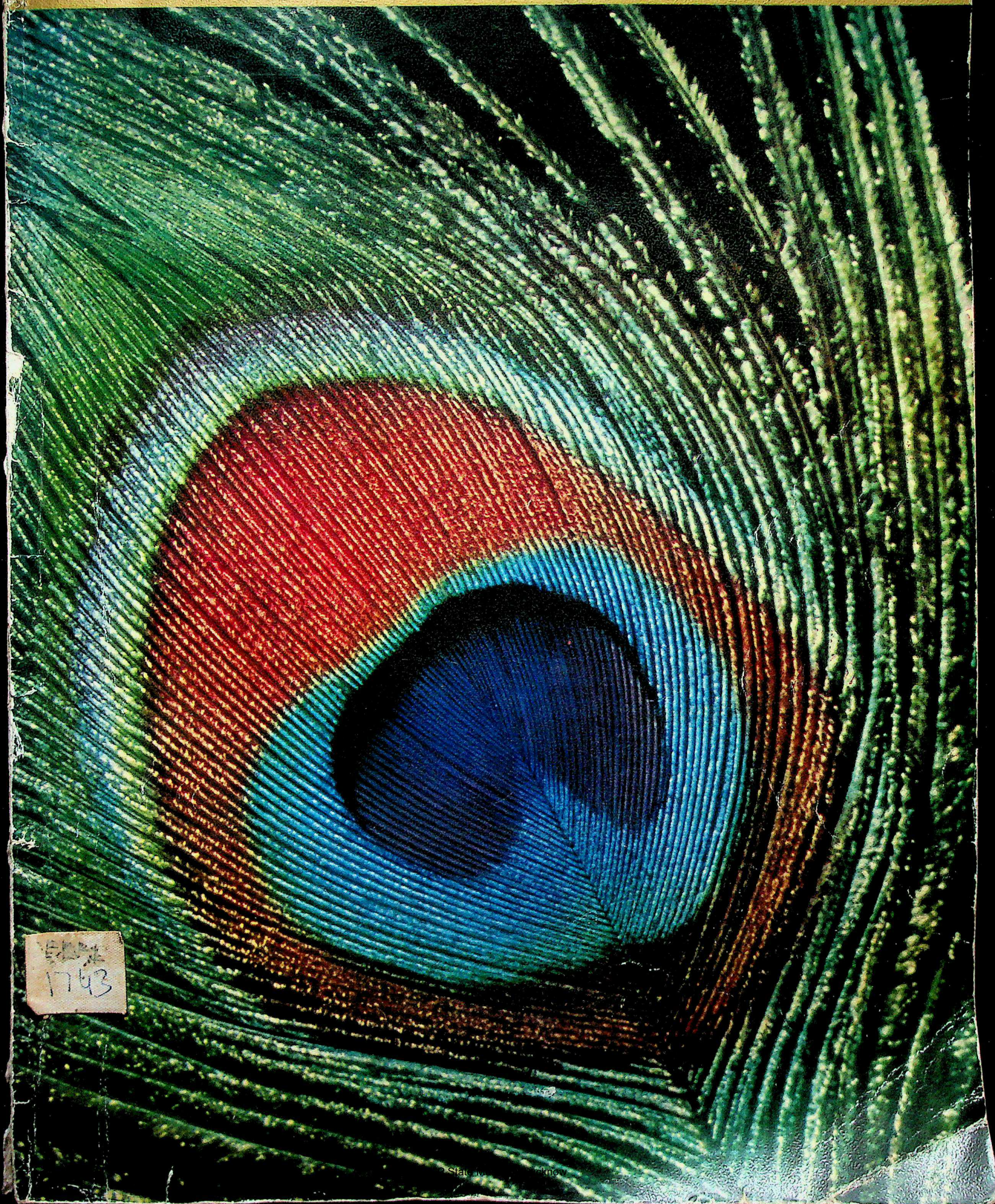


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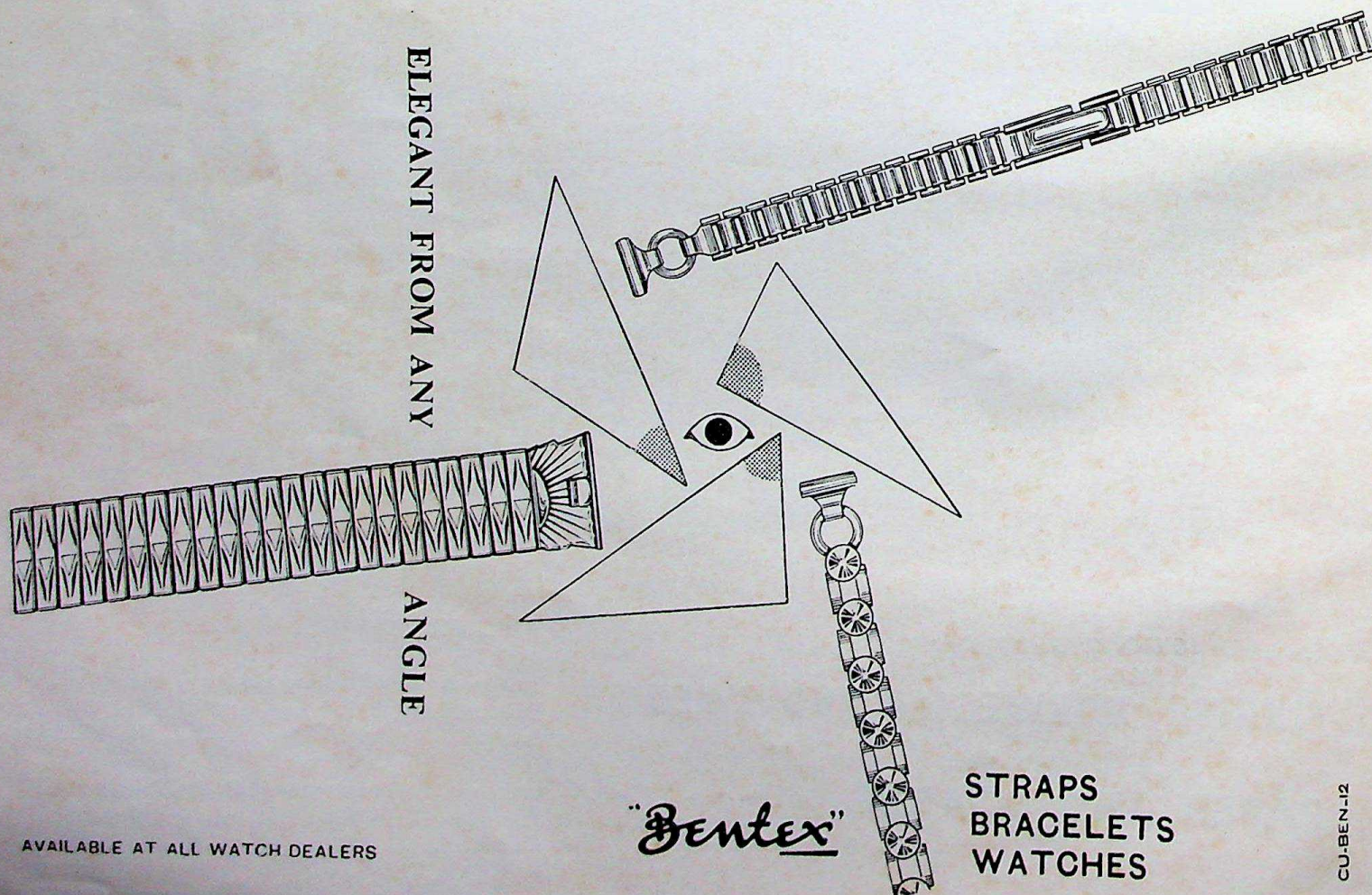


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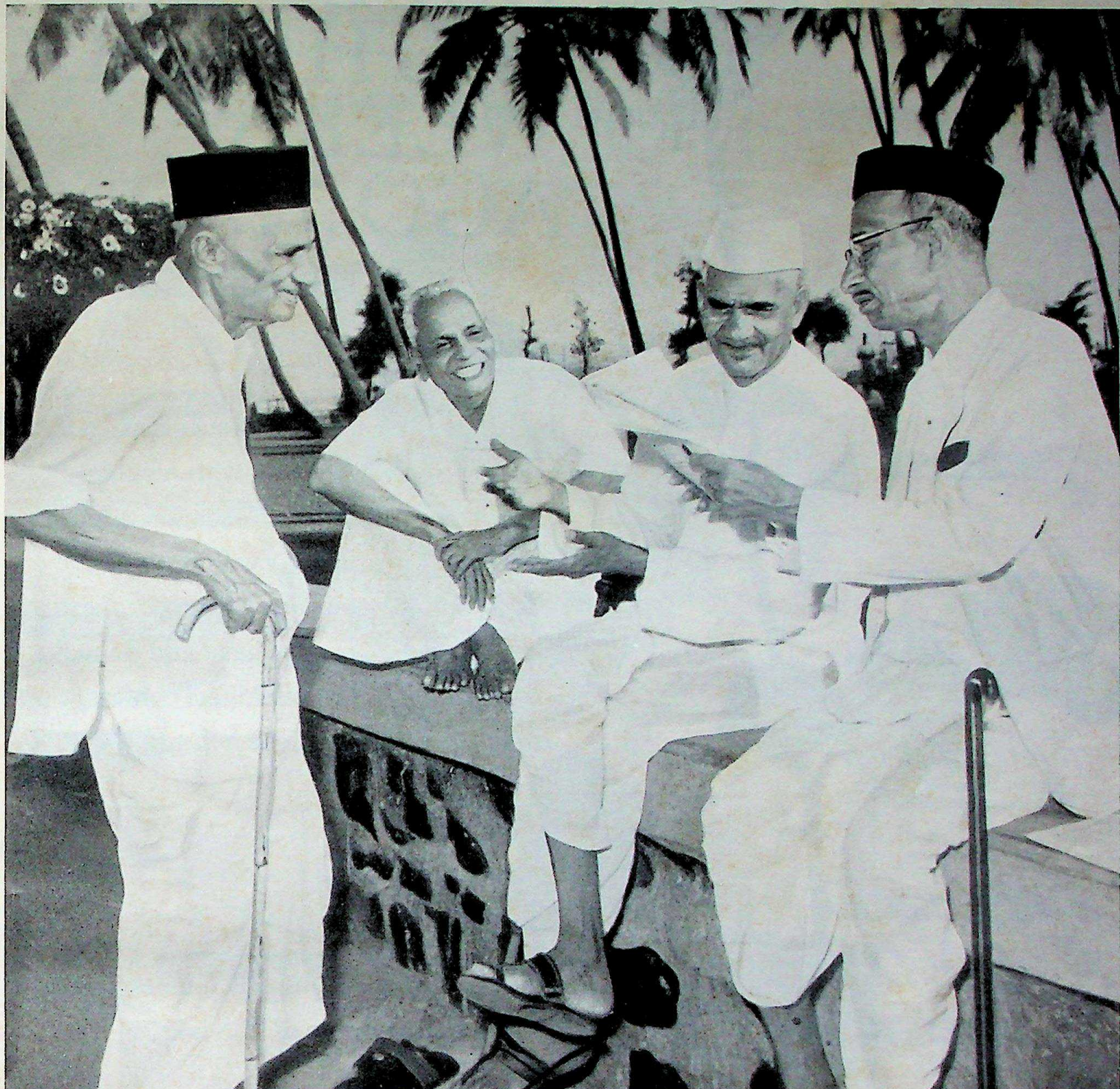


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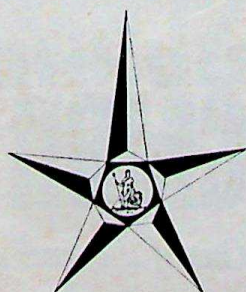


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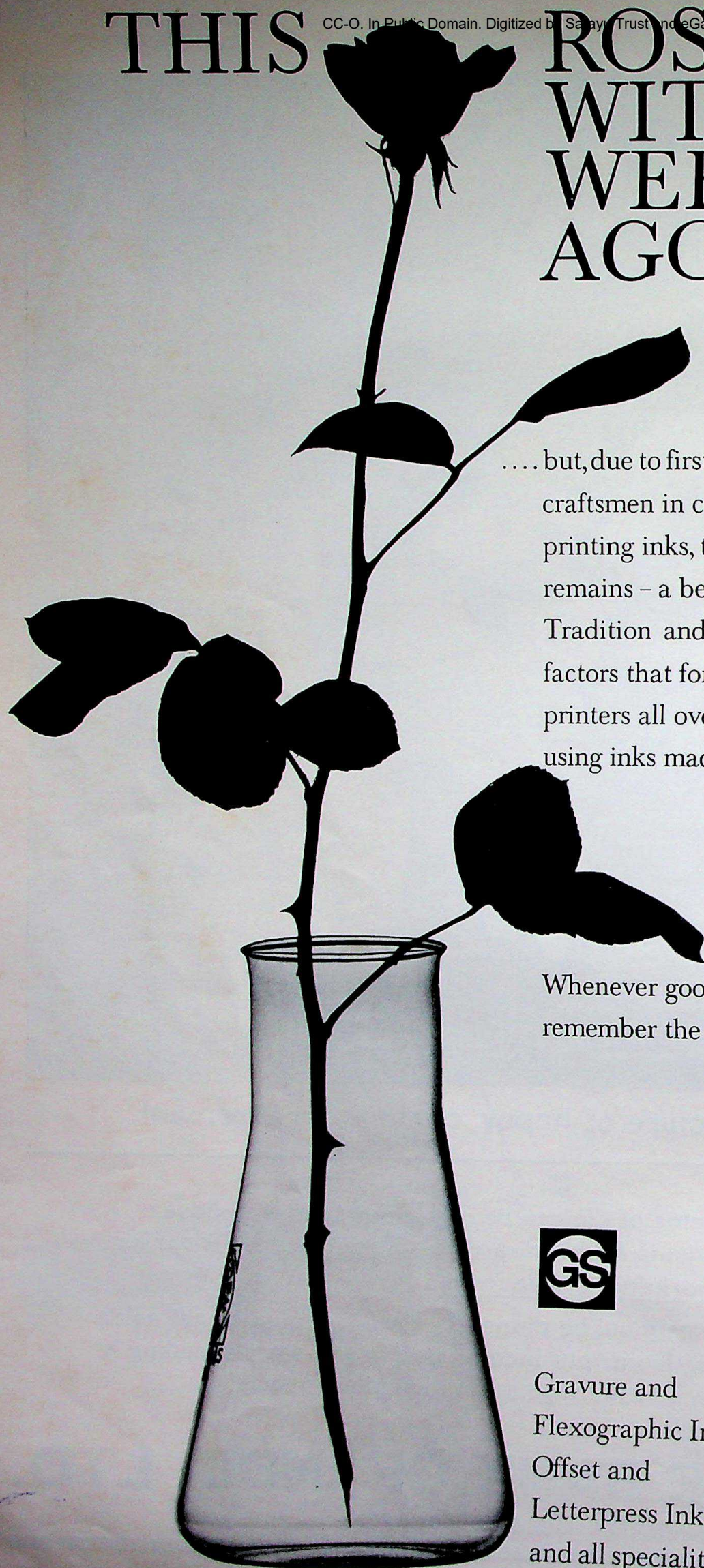
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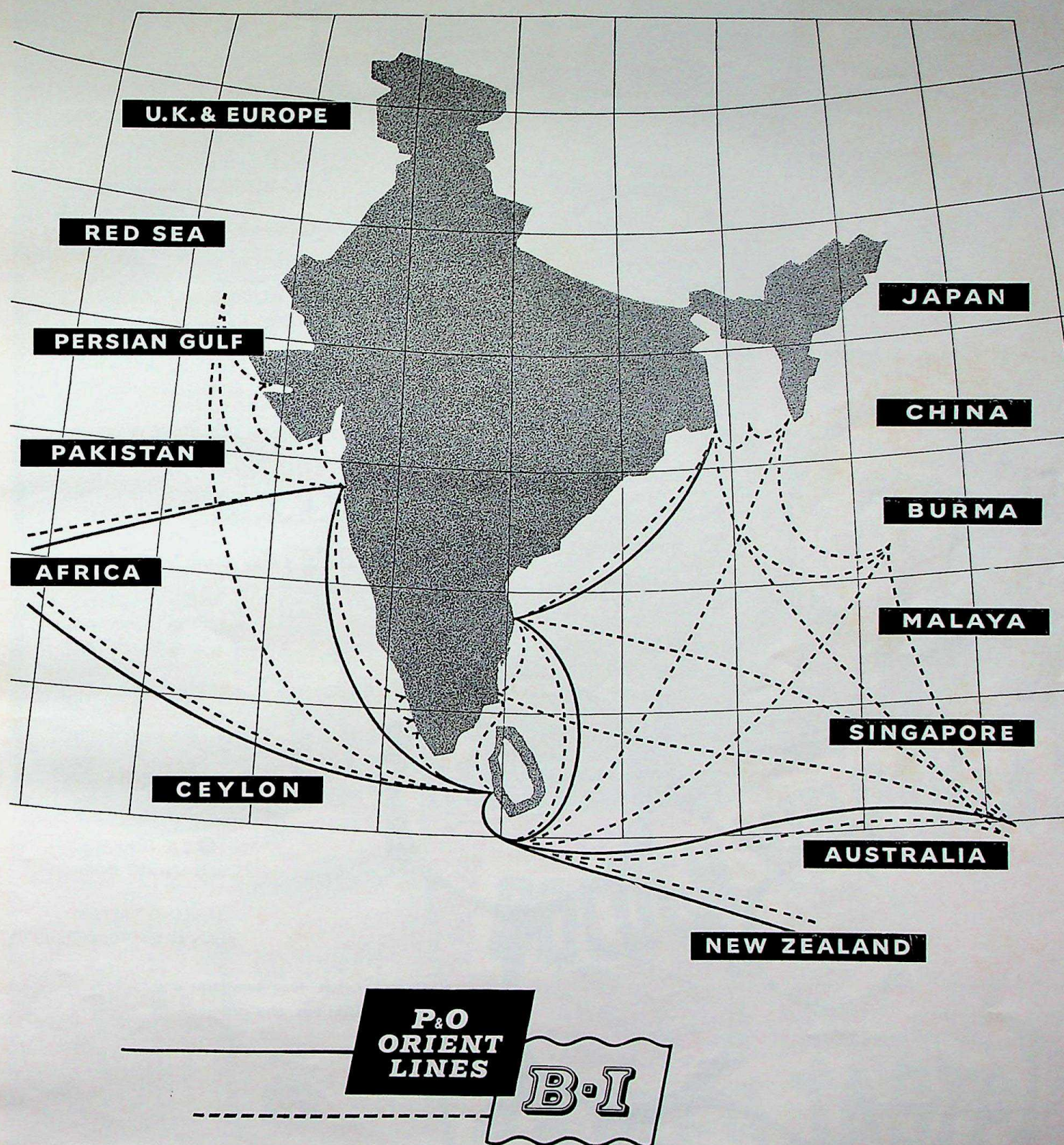
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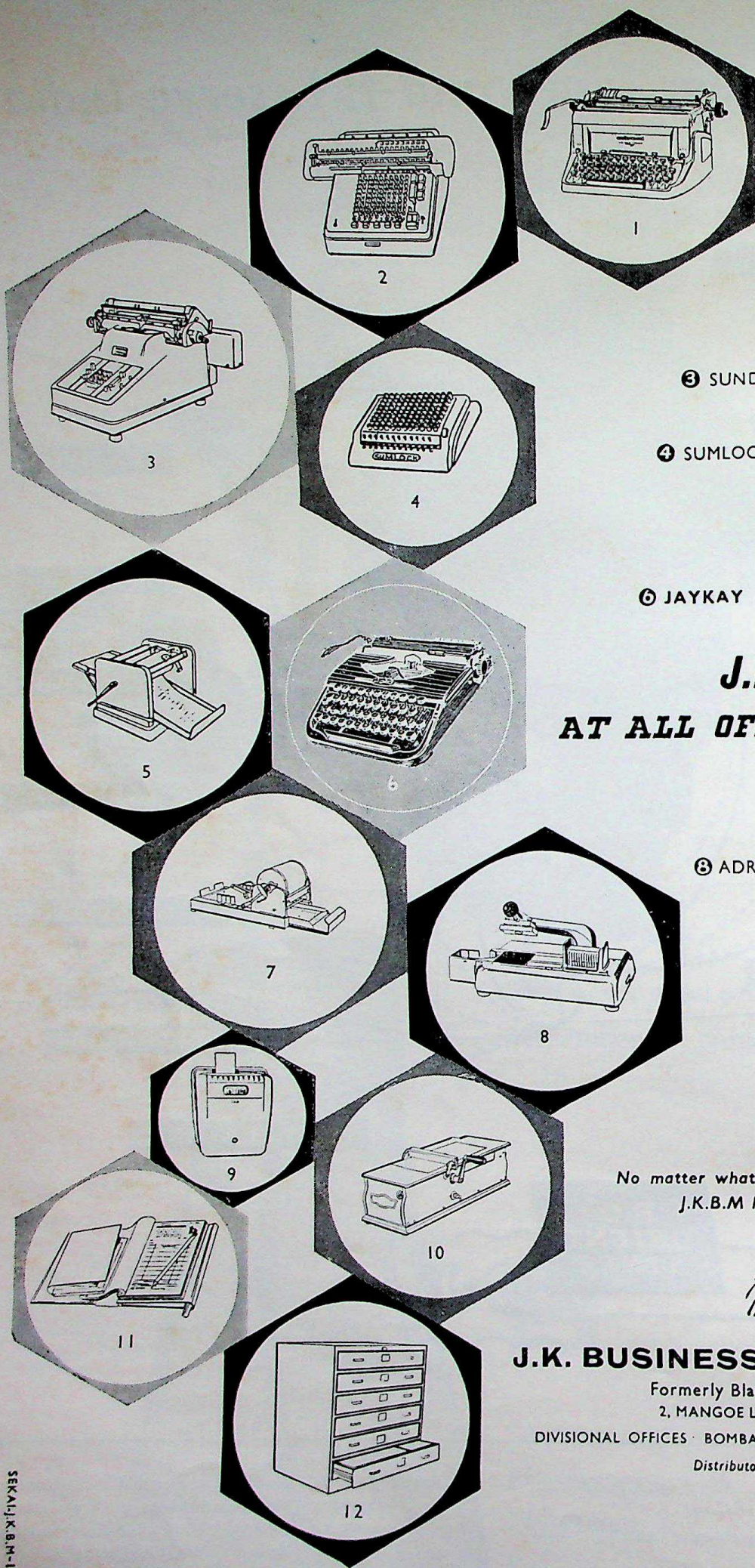
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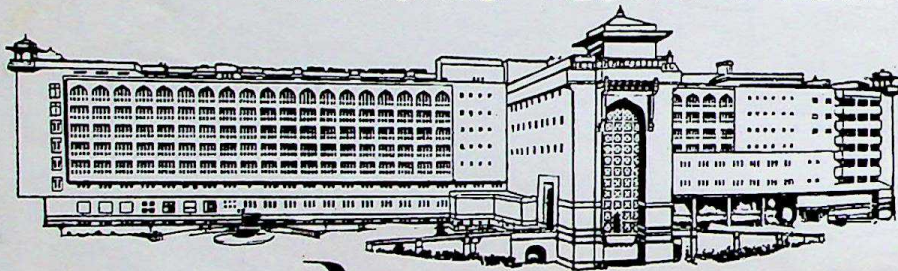
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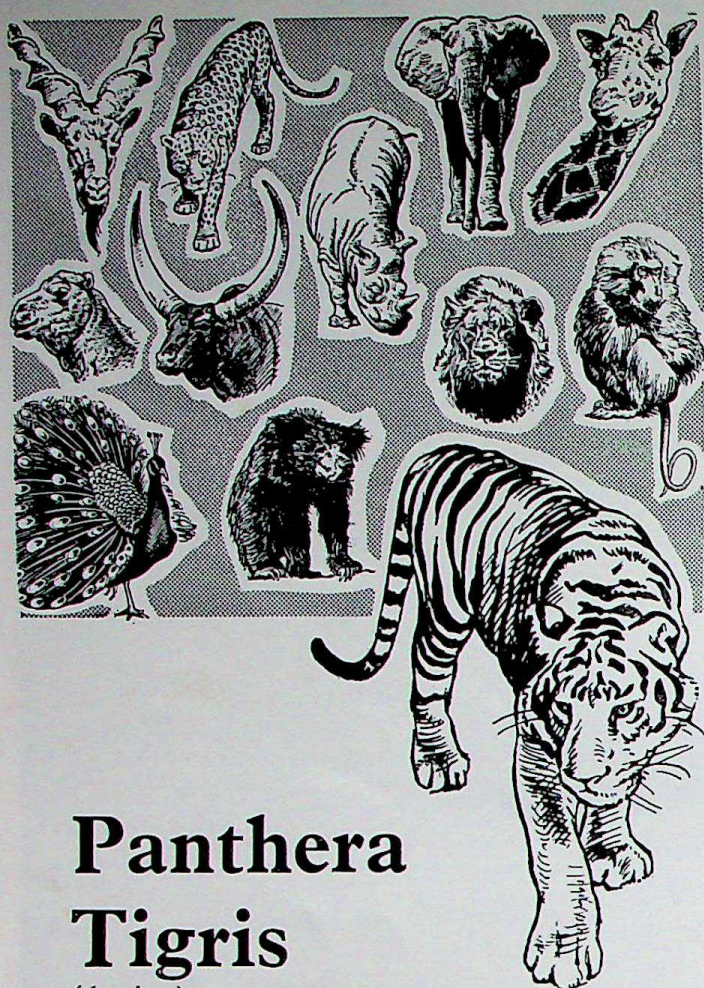
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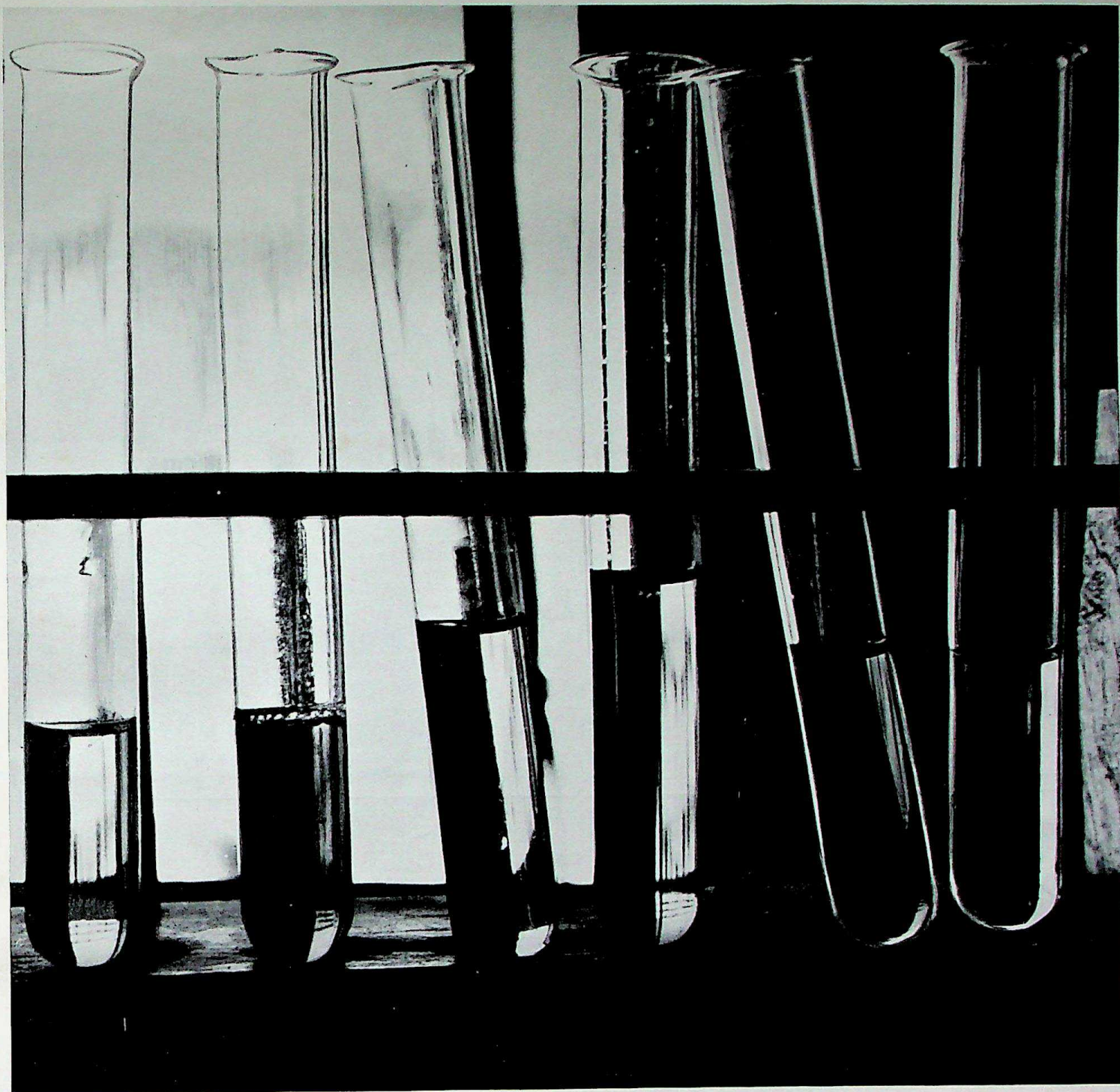
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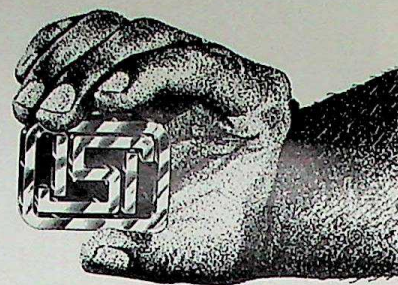
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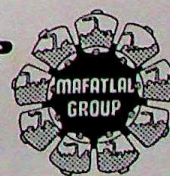
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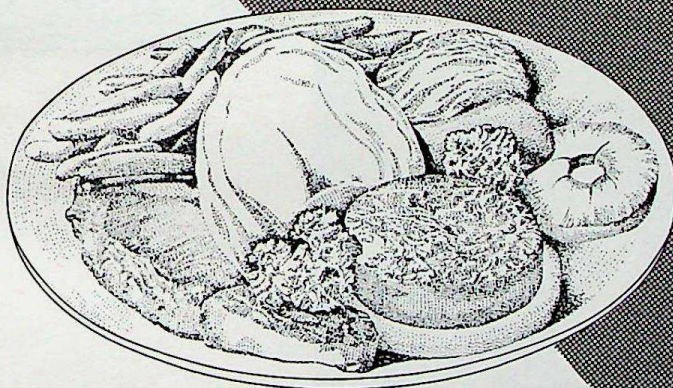
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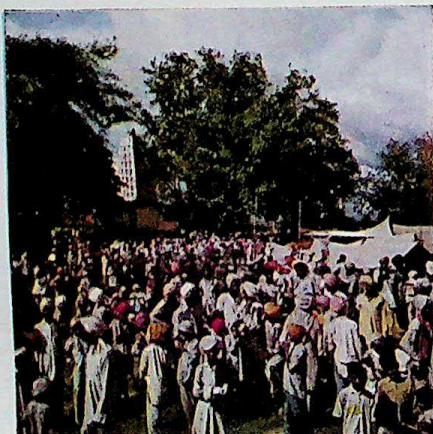
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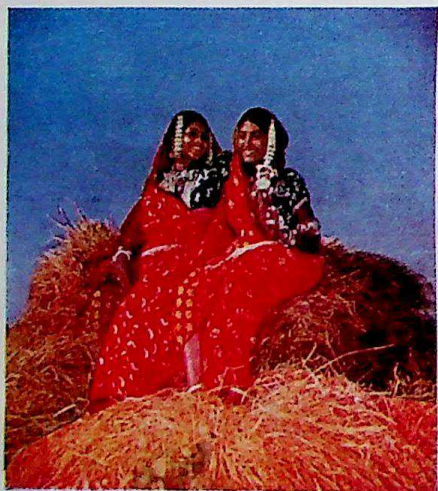


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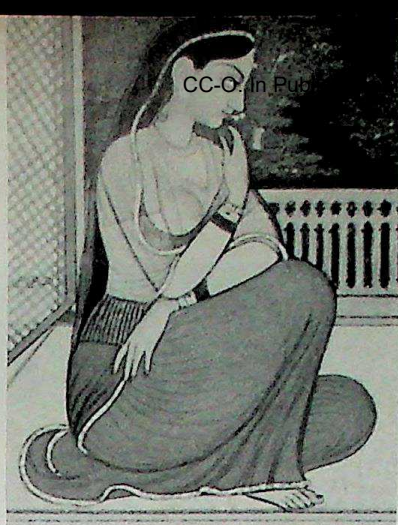
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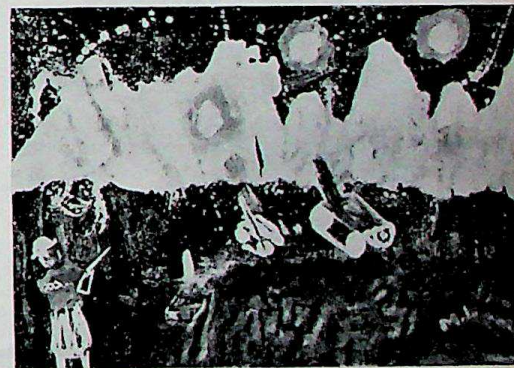
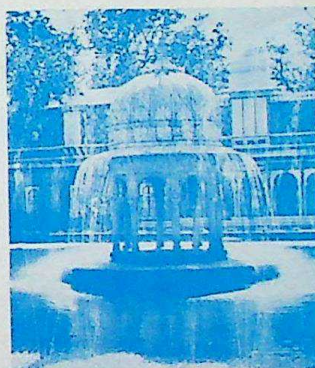
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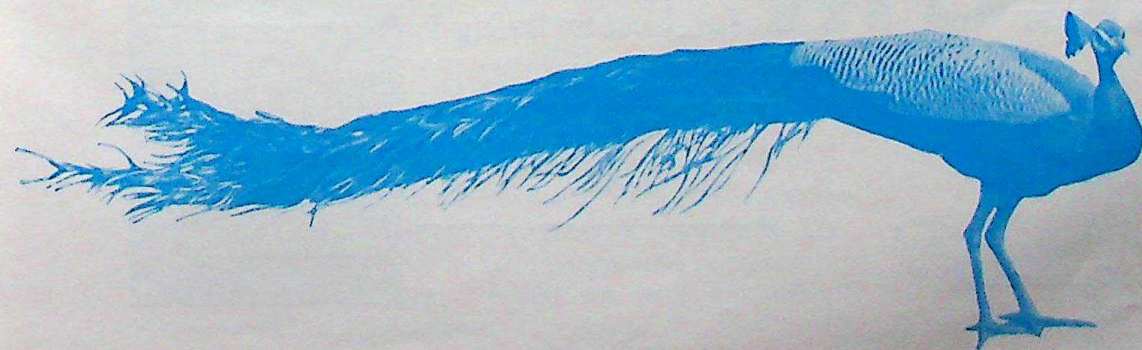
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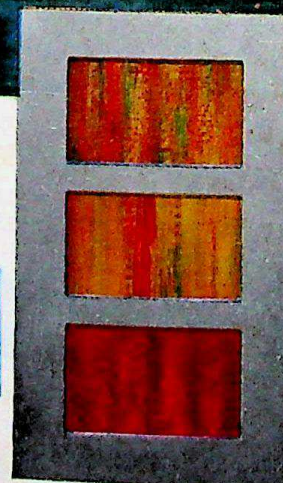
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Yama Pwe

THE RAMAYANA
PLAY OF BURMA

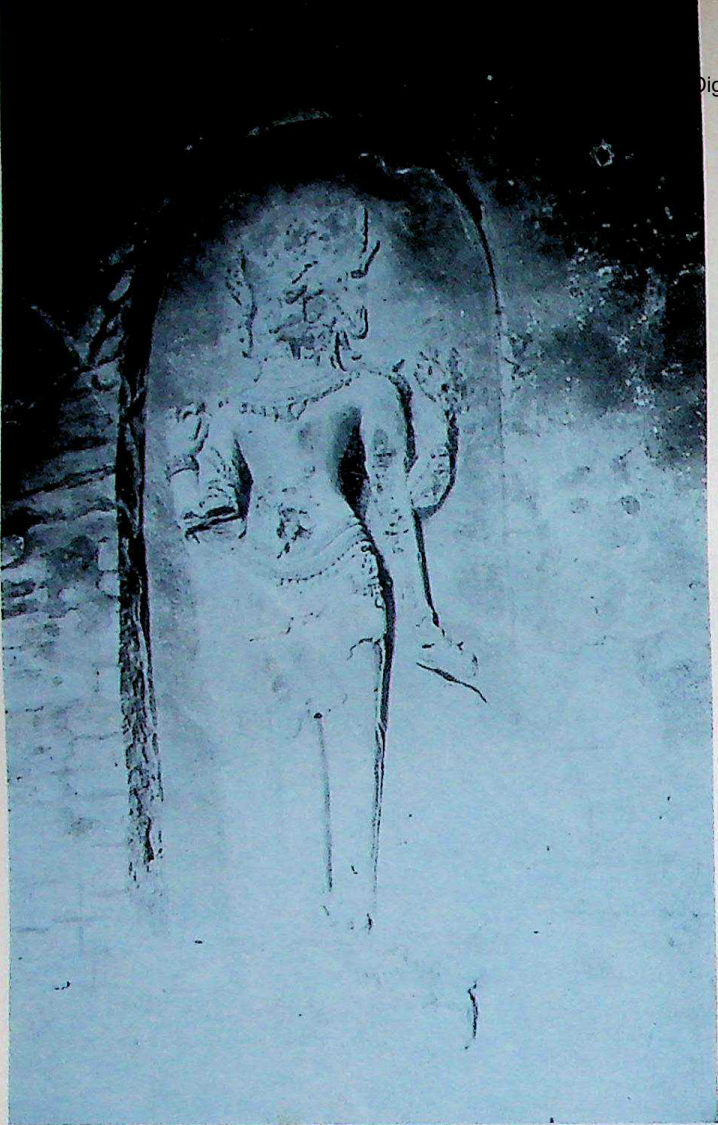
By K. BHARATHA IYER

THE *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* have enriched the life and the arts of this country in diverse ways. They have also influenced profoundly the cultural life of the countries of South-East Asia where Hindu civilization spread and took root.

The Indian stage at all levels has thrived on themes borrowed from these two epics. The old popular dance-drama which still survives in the *Yakshagana*, the *Veetinaataka*, the *Therukoothu*, and the *Bhagavata Mela* is invariably based on stories from the epics.

This popular dramatic tradition was introduced into the countries of South-East Asia and contributed to the birth and growth of drama there. The story of Rama gripped the imagination of their people and in course of time, local legends grew around the hero and other characters of the *Ramayana*.





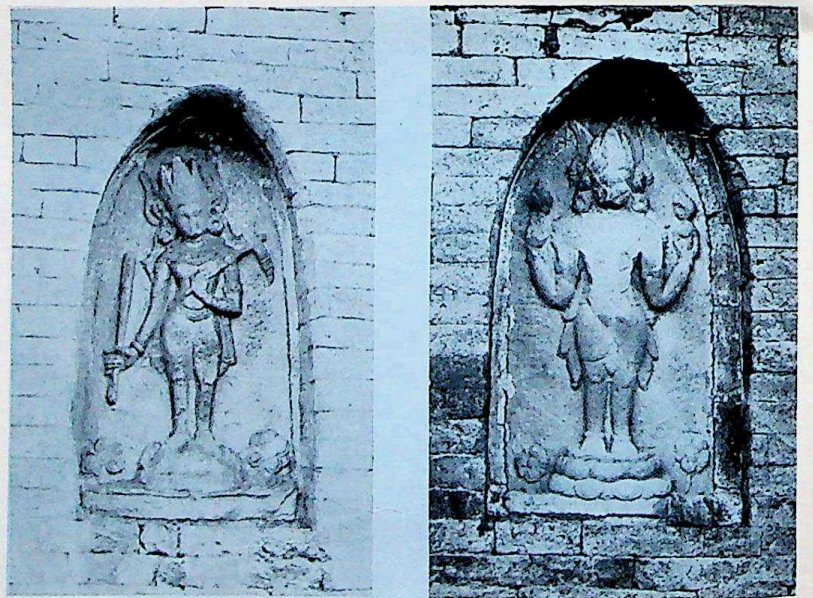
A mutilated figure of Vishnu on an inner wall of Nat Hlaing Kyaung, Pagan.



Nat Hlaing Kyaung at Pagan. A Vishnu Temple built in the 10th Century A.D.

The story of Rama reached Burma long before the Rama play. Hindu colonists, mostly from South India and Orissa, had settled down in the coastal regions of Lower Burma even before the Christian era. In the following centuries waves of immigrants from North India entered the country through Assam. Places as widely apart as Thaton, Rangoon, Pegu and Prome in Lower Burma and Pagan in Upper Burma have yielded impressive archaeological evidence of early Hindu colonisation. As G. E. Harvey points out in his *History of Burma*: "Like good Hindus they (the immigrants) built little shrines; and it is probably these shrines that form the original strata of such pagodas as the Shwemadaw at Pegu, Shwedagon at Rangoon and the Shwezayan at Thaton, all of which may well date back, in some shape or another, to before the Christian era."

The cult of Vishnu in which Rama is an important figure, took root wherever the Hindus settled down. Some



*(Above left) An image of Parsurama on the outer wall of Nat Hlaing Kyaung
(Above right) A Surya image on the outer wall of the same temple.*

(Below) An image of Brahma, Nanpaya temple, Myinpagon.



of their settlements were named after their favourite deities. Thus Pegu was known as Bisnumyo (City of Vishnu), Moulmein as Ramapura (City of Rama) and Taungdwingyi as Ramavati. The introduction and spread of Buddhism did not impair the affection of the people for Rama, for in the Dasaratha Jataka he was depicted as one of the former Bodhisattvas.

During the Pagan period (11th to 13th centuries) when Buddhism was introduced into Upper Burma by Shin Arhan, the son of a Thaton Brahmin, hundreds of masonry temples were built in Pagan to glorify the new faith.



of Burma was favourable to the spread of the Rama cult, and local legends grew connecting places in Burma with certain episodes in the epic. When Lakshmana lay mortally wounded, Hanuman, it was said, flew to Mount Popa in Upper Burma noted for herbs. Having no patience to search out the specific herb, he took a portion of the hill and flew with it back to the field of battle.

During his flight he lost his balance and fell down producing a deep crater which became the Inbaung lake in Yamethin district.

Even though the Rama story came to Burma directly from India, the Rama play reached it through Siam. In 1767 King Hsinbyushin of Burma led a military expedition into Siam. His victorious armies sacked Ayuthia, the capital, reducing the Thais to subjection. Amongst the many spoils of victory that the Burmese monarch carried back to his capital at Ava were the famed Siamese court actors of the Rama play which had established itself there as an important court institution. The brilliant dramatic talents of the Siamese court artistes (some of the actors were members of Siamese royalty), their charming dances, gorgeous costumes and picturesque masks and the elaborate staging of several episodes fascinated and entranced the Burmese monarch and his court.

Colour sketches on page 19—Rama and the golden deer.

Ravana having failed to interest Sita pursues her and urges his love with flowers which are refused. He then thrusts them into Sita's coiffure.

These temples were built by Hindu craftsmen and Pagan had a large and flourishing Hindu colony. The Nat Hlaing Kyaung, which still stands at Pagan in ruins, is a Vishnu temple. Its inner walls have bas-reliefs depicting the ten avatars of Vishnu. Kyanzitta (1084 to 1112), one of the great kings of the Pagan dynasty, in fact claimed kinship with Rama.

The religion of Pagan was a strange mixture of Saivism, Vaishnavism, animism and Buddhism. Even the Buddhism that prevailed at Thaton in the Far South was largely influenced by Brahminism. Thus, the religious climate



The monochrome and coloured drawing on these pages (22 and 23) depict a scene from the Burmese Ramayana play (which mostly follows the Valmiki Text).

Rama, Sita and Lakshmana paying their respects to Vasista, their family Guru.

All the characters except Sita and the queens of Dasaratha wear masks. The masks are an integral part of the stage-setting and help in no small measure to create the impression of a mythological world. The costumes worn by the characters are colourful and richly decorated.

Colour reproduction on page 23 :

The Burmese orchestra is composed of many ornately carved and gilded instruments. This instrument is made of large metal pieces strung together and is played with two sticks. It has a pleasant musical tinkling sound.



Gradually, the Burmese took over the Siamese play and made it their own. The language of the play was changed to Burmese and with this its popularity grew. This new art form attracted the attention of poets like U Khin U and U Pon Nya. They wrote plays borrowing themes from the Jataka tales and staged them on the model of the *Yama Pwe*. The Rama story also inspired U Toe, the most eminent among the Burmese poets, to compose his *Rama Yagan* which remains to this day the greatest poetical work in Burmese.

Though several plays were written and enacted, none of them excelled the *Yama Pwe* in popularity. The disappearance of the Burmese court no doubt affected the fortunes of the Burmese drama and, along with it, the Rama play. But the innate love of the people for dance and drama and their deep interest in the epic story saved it from extinction and the *Yama Pwe* still continues to be very popular.

The Burmese stage mostly follows the Siamese version of the Rama story which contains local interpolations. Thus after their departure from Ayodhya, Rama and Lakshmana in this version arrive at the court of a Malay king who welcomes and honours them. It is here that Bharata meets his two brothers. This brings the Chitrakuta episode very much near to Siam. Again, Rama is not banished at the behest of Kaikeyi as in Valmiki but leaves Ayodhya on the advice of Dasaratha who asks him to seek safety in the forest. In certain other episodes, however, though the Siamese version departs from Valmiki it follows one of the more popular Indian versions of the story. Ravana, for instance, appears at the *swayamvara* of Sita (Thida) as one of the suitors and tries his hand at the great bow. Similarly, the episode in which Lakshmana draws a magic circle around Sita before he leaves her in search of Rama is also taken from a popular Indian version of the story.

It is said that in the olden days it took as many as 21 nights or more to complete the enactment of the Rama story. Today the show lasts for ten or twelve nights. The performance is announced every evening by the playing of the orchestra, and is staged in the open. It begins by about 10 in the evening and goes on throughout the night. Formerly there were no curtains and no foot-lights. The stage was indeed a part of the auditorium. Now there is a raised stage. The orchestra, which takes its place just below the stage in the front row of the auditorium, consists of immense drums, stringed instruments, gongs and cymbals. It is an imposing group of instruments set in ornately carved and gilded frames. The leader of the orchestra is the director of the performance.

The shows are free to the larger part of the audience but a good part of the auditorium is covered with mats and there is a small admission fee for a seat on these mats. Seats on the mats have the advantage that the tired can go to sleep. As the performance lasts throughout the night it is not unusual for many in the audience to have a short nap. The approaches to the auditorium are filled with stalls which sell food-stuffs of all kinds and also knick-knacks and fancy goods. The crowds are always in a gay mood and there is much noise and laughter. The whole atmosphere is indeed that of a fair.



Near the entrance to the auditorium is a shed which serves as a temporary shrine where the masks are kept in two separate galleries; those of the noble characters of the play like Rama, Lakshmana, Dasaratha, Vasista and Viswamitra in one and those of the demoniac characters like Ravana, Khara, Indrajit and Surpanakha known as Gambi on the Burmese stage in the other. These two sets of masks are always kept apart and never brought together lest some untoward incident take place. Parasurama's celibate sanctity is honoured by not allowing that character's mask near any woman. If that happens, it is feared, it will rouse the wrath of that fiery warrior and bring misfortune to the troupe. The masks are objects of veneration, for they symbolise supernatural forces. The more religious-minded among the people kneel before them and offer prayers.

All the characters in the play wear masks except Sita and Dasaratha's queens. The masks of the noble characters





have a simple colour scheme. The Rama mask is dark green while that of Lakshmana is of gold colour. Vasista's mask is of light rose while that of Viswamitra's is of a deeper shade. The *asuric* characters like Ravana, Khara, Indrajit and Surpanakha wear hideously picturesque masks. Ferocity and untamed passion are symbolised by the complex colour schemes of these masks. Their uneven surface mouldings are intended to emphasise the ungainly physical features and the abnormal psychological attitudes of the demoniac characters. The masks are an

integral part of the stage-setting and help in no small measure to project the personality of each character and create the impression of a mythological world.

The play proper does not usually commence until twelve o'clock. Preliminary dances calculated to entertain the audience go on for a couple of hours. One of the usual themes is that of the lonely wood-cutter who has a sudden encounter with a tiger in a jungle. The tiger is elaborately made up to resemble a stylized version of the beast. Its movements are cleverly mimed and the

spectators enjoy with relish the mock fight that ensues between the wood-cutter and the tiger.

The costumes worn by the characters are gorgeous and ornate. They are borrowed and adapted from the Siamese stage and are very much like the costumes of the Cambodian dance-drama actors. Sewn with gold and silver threads the coats and trousers sparkle. The most noticeable feature of the costumes are the flame-tipped and wing-like decorations that cover the breast, the shoulders and the waist and also hang down in front. The actors wear socks and velvet slippers and most of the masks have a pointed and gilded crest covering the top of the head giving the impression of an opulent headgear, somewhat like a *kirita*. On the whole, the made-up actors are a mass of splendour. Sita and the queen mothers are dressed in silk *loungyis* that trail on the ground and in white jackets that have wing-like decorations. They wear pretty tiara-like crowns on the head. Ascetics like Vasista and Viswamitra wear a plain *loungyi*, a Burmese overcoat and an *uttariya* thrown over the left shoulder.

Every actor is a dancer as well as a singer. The characters enter the stage dancing, and with the masks on. As the dance ends in a telling gesture, the actor pulls up the mask which now resembles a tilted headgear revealing fully his face. Thus the actor functions on two levels. With the mask on, he appears as a being from the distant world of mythology. His behaviour and movements are then strictly controlled and in complete accord with this new personality. But when he pulls up his mask revealing his all too human face, his behaviour and actions are those of a human being.

The dialogue of the characters is conducted in a modulated voice and the language is often poetic and characterised by ceremonious beauty. However, the actors very often depart from the text of the play displaying their personal idiosyncrasies and at times even descend into the trivial and the commonplace. They thank the audience and address the orchestra. Much more than this, the frequent intervention of the clowns—there are at least two of them on the stage and they seldom leave it—develop the scenes into burlesques. The clowns are very privileged persons, they satirise everything and everybody. They invent their own conversation and have a knack of reducing the most solemn moments of the drama to a lighter vein. The audience at times rolls with laughter at their merry quips.

When the clowns take over, the drama recedes into the background. But that does not prevent the audience from picking up the thread of the story as soon as the stylized dance is resumed and the conventional dignity of the characters on the stage is once again established by their strictly controlled behaviour. Even though the dances are not interpretative of the text in the sense of *abhinaya*, the gestures and other movements which amount to mimed action reveal the flow of events. The story bubbles through its cascading rhythms. Certain key gestures shown and postures assumed in the course of these stylized dances are indicative of the dominant emotion or idea of the scene. At such moments they more often than not reveal Indian influences. The hand gestures with the specific disposition of the fingers form *nrtta* or even *nrttya hasthas* as in the dances of Siam, Cambodia, Bali and Java.

The drawings in colour on these pages depict the incident of the Golden Deer, a demonically clever ruse played at the behest of Ravana in order to tempt Sita and to separate her from Rama and Lakshmana.

The group on page 24 shows Lakshmana (on the left), Rama (in the centre) and Sita (on the right). Rama with bow in hand is in a heroic pose at the moment of pursuit of the golden deer. Gesturing with her hand which is in suchi mudra, Sita looks coy.

On the other page Surpanakha known as Gambi in Burma, wearing a rakshasi mask is pointing out Sita and Rama and persuades the golden deer to approach and tempt them. Enchanted at the sight of the golden deer Sita beseeches Rama to capture it. Rama chases this demon in the guise of the golden deer, leaving Sita in the care of Lakshmana. Alarmed at the false cries for help raised by the demon, Sita apprehends danger to Rama and compels Lakshmana to go to his help. Ravana then appears on the scene and carries away the helpless Sita.



The following close-up views of scenes from the *Rama Pwe* reveal with clarity the technique of acting and also its nature.

In the scene of breaking the bow at Janaka's palace, Sita is actually present on the stage, along with Rama, Lakshmana, Viswamitra and the inevitable clowns. The attempt of Ravana to break the bow causes visible grief to Sita. While one of the clowns adds to her grief by telling her that Ravana is bound to succeed in breaking the bow, the other one consoles her by prophesying his failure. Sita is helplessly tossed between hope and fear by the constant interference of the clowns. When Lakshmana tries his hand at the bow, Sita cheers up and when Rama takes up the bow she prays to the gods to ensure his success. In between the attempts of the great warriors, the clowns try to lift the bow and adjust it causing no end of merriment. This levity does not affect the drama since deep down in his subconscious every one present realises that the bow can be lifted and broken by Rama alone and none else. After Rama breaks the great bow there is a fight between him and Ravana. Both make long-winded speeches and take care to thank the audience before they leave the stage.

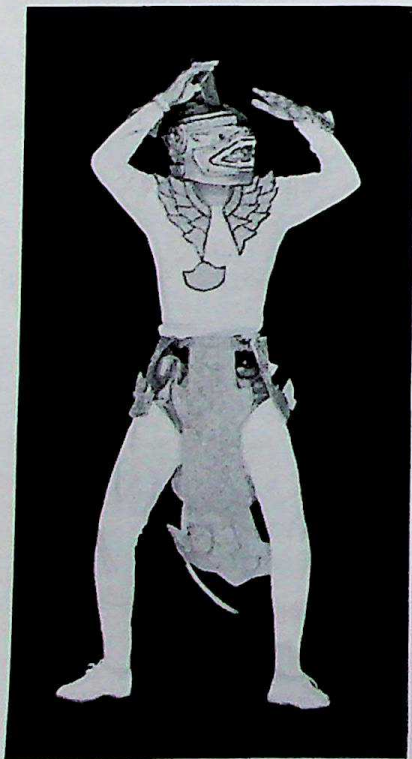
At the beginning of the Asoka Vana scene in which Ravana makes love to the captive Sita, the orchestra strikes up a vigorous and spirited note and Dattagiri (derived from Dasagriva) as Ravana is known in Burma, enters the stage dancing and with his fierce mask on. His bearing is dignified and his movements are stately and proud. After the dance, he pulls up his mask revealing his visage. He is now all too human and makes a passionate and

long-winded avowal of his love for Sita. So far, all his efforts have been fruitless. He is impatient; and is at his wit's end. At this stage one of the clowns enters dragging Sita by her scarf. Her movements and attitude eloquently express her misery. Ravana pleads his love. The only response this elicits from Sita is one of repugnance and grief.

While this duet goes on, one of the clowns plays the part of an accomplice of Ravana much to the annoyance of Sita. Frequently he drags Sita and goads and pushes her against Ravana while she protests vehemently. Enraged at the liberties that the clown takes with her, Sita slaps him on the face. Approving exclamations and roars of laughter rise from the audience. Even though the clown urges Ravana to take Sita by force, Ravana hopes to win her love. He offers her a flower in token of his love. Sita refuses to accept it. The offer and refusal are repeated creating a dramatic situation of pursuit and evasion of the passionate male and the unwilling female. At last Ravana aided by the clown succeeds in thrusting the flower into Sita's coiffure much to her aversion, and the scene comes to a close.

The treatment of every scene is designed to cater to the popular taste. The changes that certain episodes and some of the characters undergo are perhaps inevitable in the process of naturalisation in a foreign setting. The people of Siam and Burma have, in many ways, embellished the play to bring it in harmony with their national genius. What is really significant is that both have made the Rama play their own and cherish it as a proud national heritage.

The fight between Bali and Sugriva, the monkey brothers.



Hanuman in a fighting posture.

Lakshmana in combat with Khara and Dushana, the two Rakshasas.





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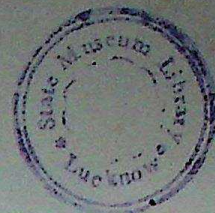




अनियारे दीरघ दृगनु किती न तरुनि समान ।
 वह चितवनि औरै कछू जिहिं बस होत सुजान ॥
 मोर-मुकुट की चंद्रिकेनु यौं राजत नंदनंद ।
 मनु ससिसेखर की अकंस किय सेखर सतचंद ॥



अपनियारे दीरघ दृगनु विली न लेखि
 विनयनि श्रीरे कछु जिहि बस होन सुख
 यो राजत नैवसेव
 किन सेखर सतधर



KANGRA

PAINTINGS

OF THE

BIHARI

SAT SAI

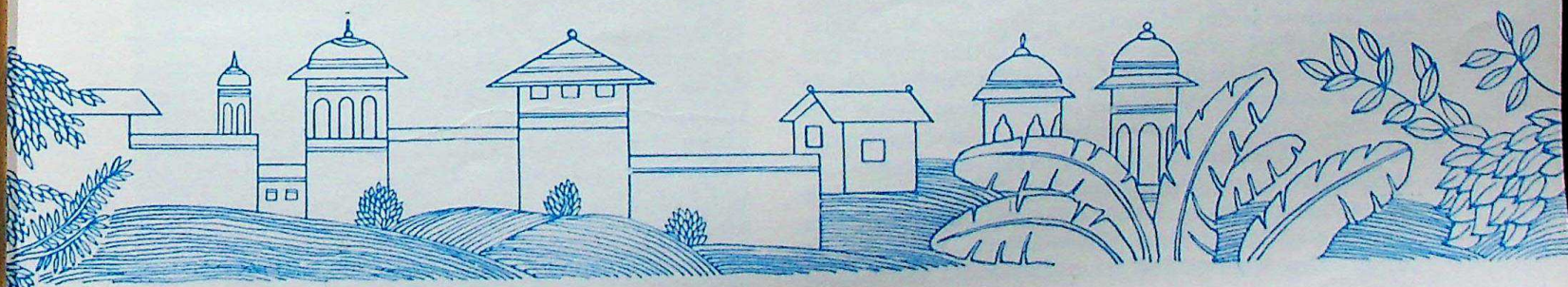
By M. S. RANDHAWA

“EVERY work of art is fragrant of its time” says Laurence Binyon. There is a striking similarity in works of art belonging to the same period. From the style of a painting we are often able to tell its date and settle its provenance with reasonable accuracy. A style, like the march of the seasons, has its own rhythm. Just as spring ripens into summer which then fades into the chill of autumn and the cold of winter, a style takes its birth, reaches maturity and then decays. Under the spell of a new inspiration creative enthusiasm is kindled and a great art is born. But with the passage of time the inspiration subsides, and the art becomes lifeless and mechanical.

Kangra painting reached its most vigorous phase in the fifteen years from 1790 to 1805 A.D. Inspired by the

Radha-Krishna cult, many Kangra artists produced works of great lyrical beauty. In Sansar Chand who was the paramount ruler of the Kangra Valley during this period they found a patron who greatly appreciated and encouraged their work. When disorder and confusion prevailed in the plains of Northern India, in the Kangra Valley the artists found peace and security. It was under these happy circumstances that they created a style which combines elegance with a nervous grace and a new sensitiveness of line with glowing colours.

During over a decade they produced many memorable paintings which convey the spiritual ardour of the Radha-Krishna cult with a delicacy that has seldom been matched. It is not a spiritual art in the sense of Christian art in the West where spirit and body are regarded as





A painting of Mewar school (late 17th century A.D.) illustrating the opening verse of Bihari Sat Sai.

two separate entities. Never gloomy, cold or aloof it is a happy blend of the sensuous and the spiritual. The spirituality is never chilled by an ascetic disdain for the female form or the delights of love.

As in the arts of China and Japan, there is a close association of poetry and painting in the art of Kangra. The aim of the artist is to embody in the picture the emotion he feels on reading the poem. In this he achieves unique success. In the process of translating poetry into painting, he in fact perfects an art which has a new lyrical intensity. This explains the emotive power of some of these paintings which are really love lyrics translated in line and colour. In no other art do we find so happy a marriage of literary and plastic ideas. The poetry of Keshav Das, Sur Das and Bihari inspired a whole cycle

of paintings in Rajasthan. But the way in which Manak, the Kangra artist, matched his imagination with that of Bihari was unique. Seldom before had a painter rendered the love lyrics of a poet in line and colour with such sincerity and passion.

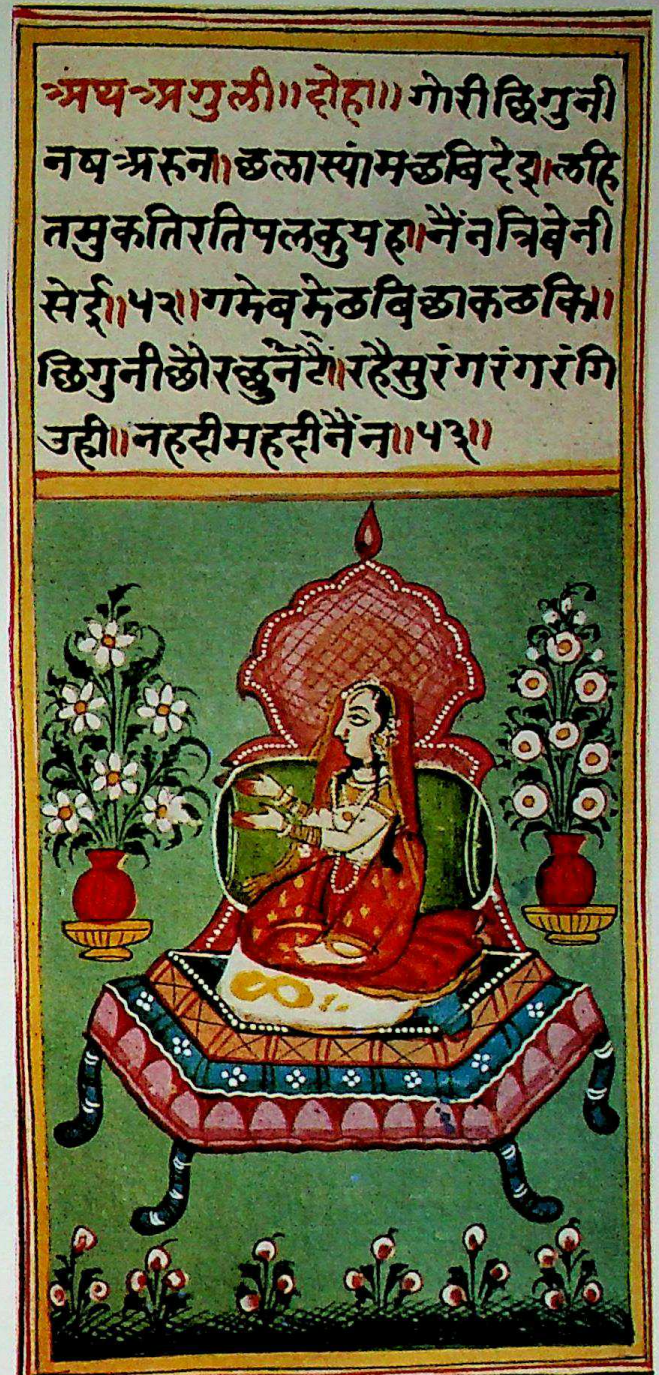
Bihar Lal Chaube (1595-1663) was born in Gwalior and spent his boyhood at Orchha where his father Keshav Rai lived. His father was a Brahmin and his mother a Kshatriya, and he belonged to that mixed caste now known as Ray, which produced such well-known poets as Padmakar, Gwal and Dev. In 1607, his father left Orchha and settled down, with his wife's family, in Mathura, the home of Braj-bhasha. In 1618, Shahjahan happened to visit Brindavana. Bihari had an opportunity of displaying his poetic talent at an imperial darbar and won his

appreciation. Shahjahan patronised Hindu poets. For some time Bihari stayed at his court at Agra where he met Abdur Rahim Khankhana, the well-known Hindi poet who encouraged him in his creative work. Among the feudatory rulers who once assembled at Agra to attend a darbar was Mirza Jai Singh Kacchwaha, Raja of Amber, who was impressed by Bihari's poetry and invited him to Amber.

According to a legend about the origin of *Sat Sai*, Raja Jai Singh married a young girl and spent all his time with her to the utter neglect of his duties as a ruler. Within a year there was a chaos in the administration and the ministers grew desperate. Together with the senior Rani, Anant Kumari, who was jealous of the young wife, they consulted Bihari who suggested to them

Below: A page from an illuminated manuscript of Bihari Sat Sai.

Right: Another page from the same manuscript. Both the paintings are in Rajasthani style dated 1760 A.D. — with the appropriate "dohas" (verses) in Devnagari script.

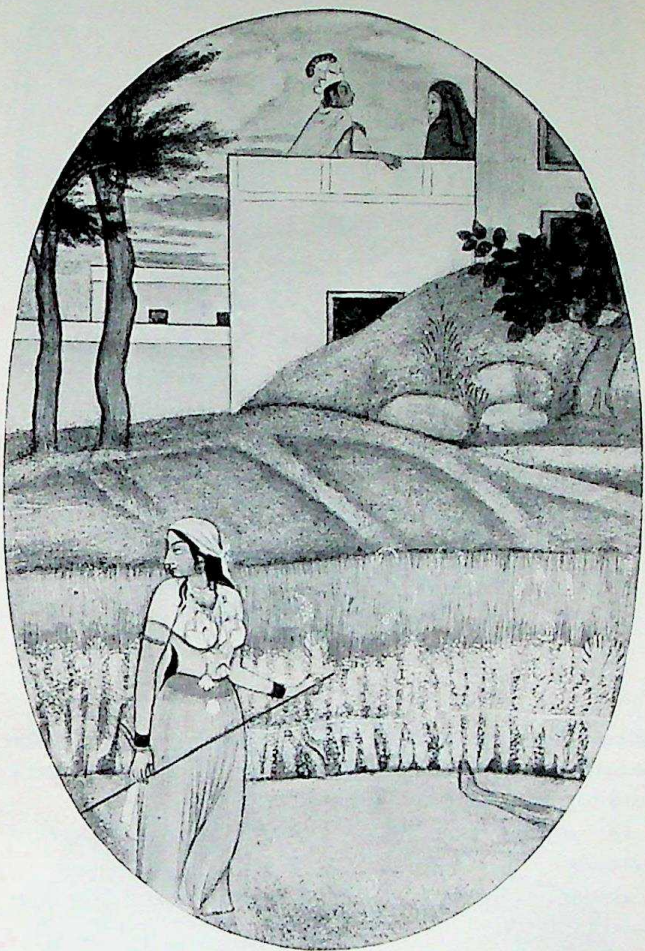
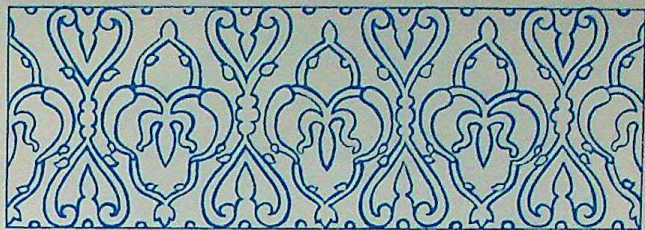


an easy way of curing the Raja of his infatuation. He wrote down the following couplet of the *Sat Sai* which alludes to the immature age of the bride on a piece of paper:

Nahī parāga nahī madhur madhū, nahī vikās aihī kāl
Ali! kalī hō saun bandhiō, āgain kaun havāl.

(There is no pollen; there is no sweet honey; nor yet has the blossom opened. If the bee is enamoured of the bud, who can tell what will happen when she is a full-blown flower?)

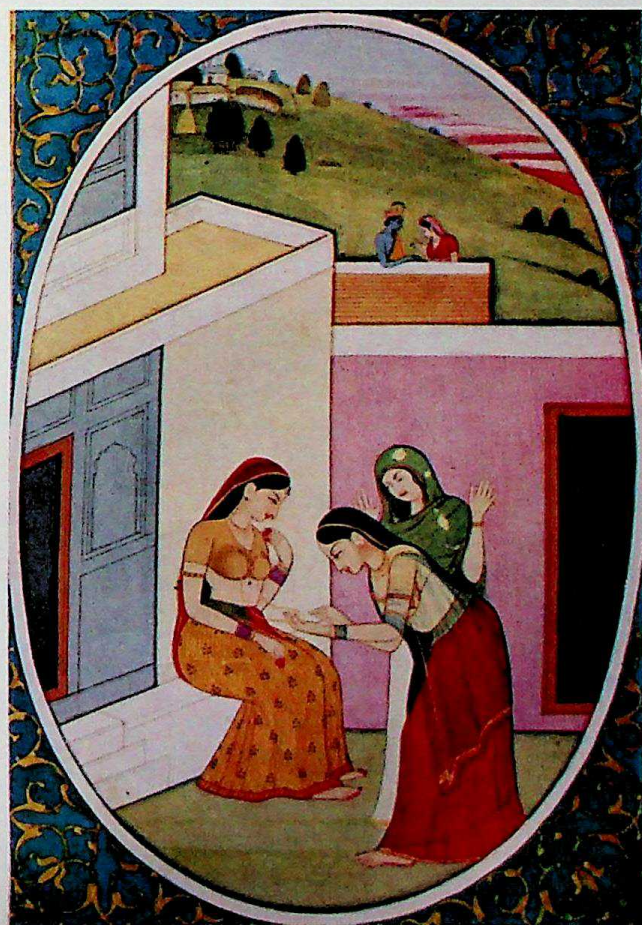
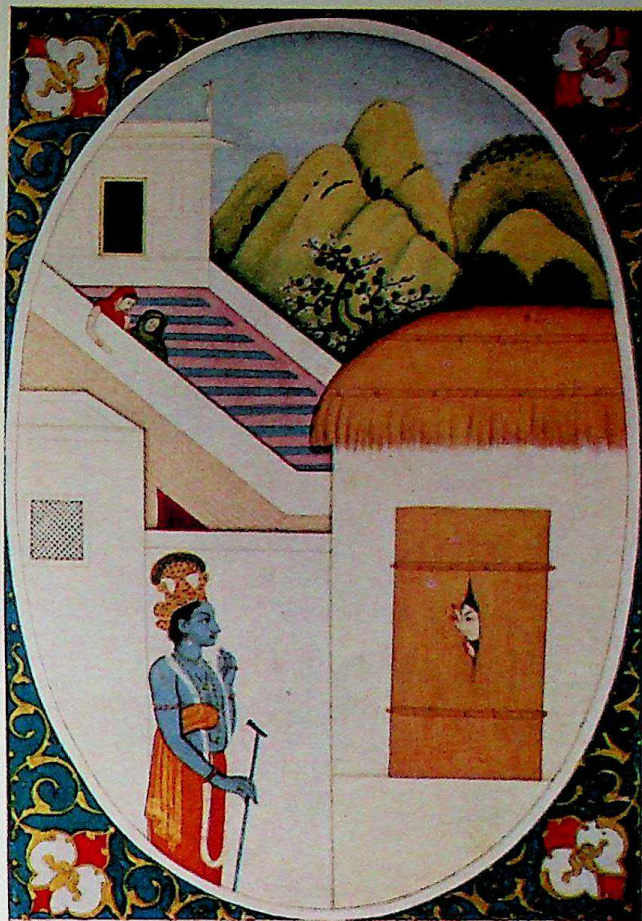
The piece of paper on which this verse was written was concealed amongst the flower petals which were sent each day to Raja Jai Singh's palace to be strewn over the royal bed. In the morning the paper bruised the Raja's body. He read the verse written on it and at once



A vignette in black and white described in the text. Vide (a) on page 35.

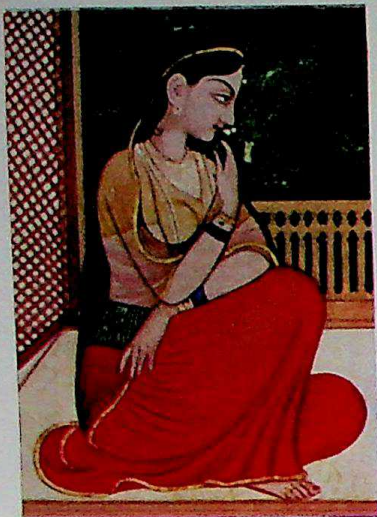
Right Top: It is noon-time when all is quiet and peaceful. Krishna is greeted by Radha through an opening in a chink.

Right below: A friend of Radha reads out a letter of assignment to her.



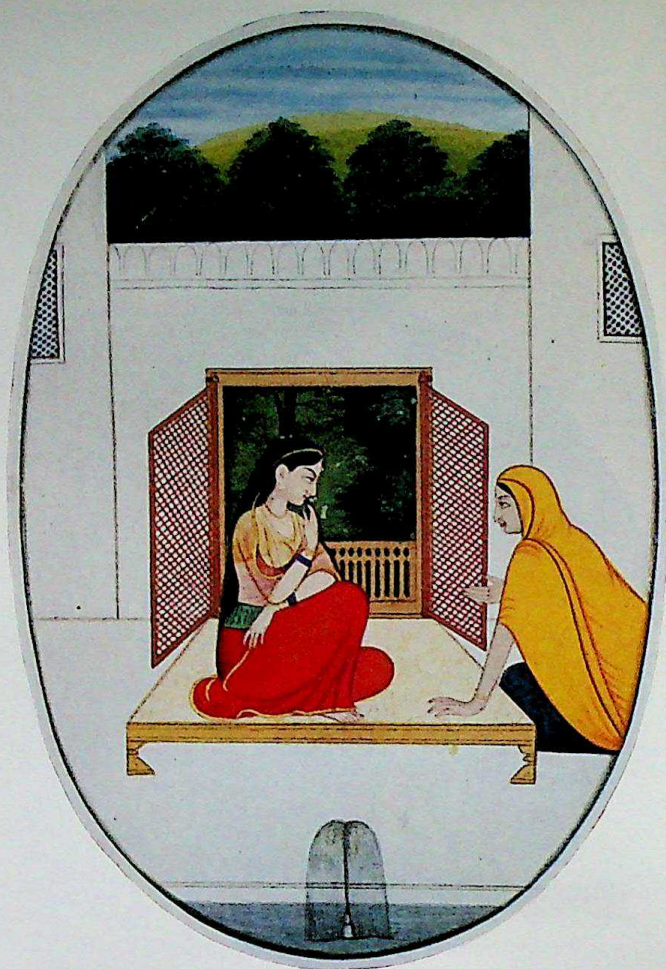
dull sophistication of the imperial court and find a new sense of joy and freedom, and a new serenity, in their close contact with nature.

No one who visits the Kangra Valley can be insensitive to its charm. On one side is a snow-covered mountain range rising to 16,000 feet and below it is a green sloping valley at an altitude ranging from 3,000 to 4,000 feet, with a profusion of mango, plantain, cherry and medlar trees and rambling roses. Terraced paddy fields irrigated by streams which descend from perennial snows sparkle like mosaics of mirrors when they are flooded with water in the month of June. Nowhere are there such exquisite shade of green, so comforting, and so pleasant. Spread all over the valley are homesteads of farmers buried in groves of mango, bamboo, plantain and *kachnar*. Unlike most



Above: A detail from the painting reproduced on the right. Radha receives through a friend a message for which she has been waiting anxiously. She is so deeply absorbed in thought that she seems oblivious of her surroundings.

Below: The theme of this illustration is described in the text. Vide (b) on page 35.



hillmen, the people of Kangra are intensely aware of the beauty of their land. In one of their folk songs, they speak with joy of their native hills:

Oh mother Dhauladhar, you have made Kangra a paradise!

Green, green, hills, and deep, deep, gorges, with rivers flowing.

Lithe and handsome young men, lovely women who speak so gently.

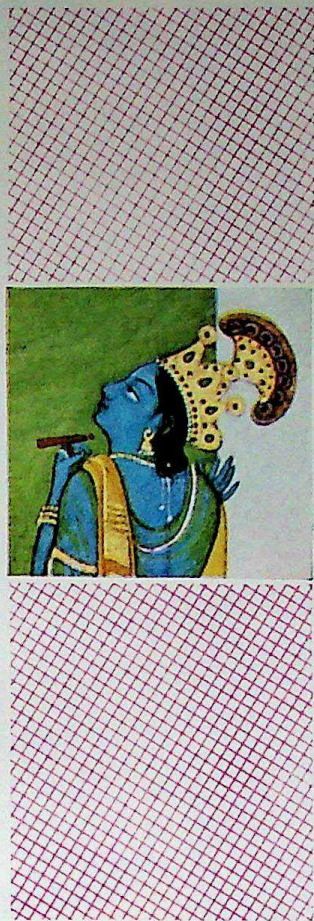
Oh my dear land of Kangra, you are unique!

It is not surprising that though the Kangra artists lived and worked in a valley where the snow-mountain range of the Dhauladhar is constantly in sight, the snow-mountains do not figure in any of their paintings. Dhauladhar is too domineering, cold and forbidding to serve as an appropriate background for the gentle love-play of these paintings.

Here is an art which celebrates both life and love. The eyes of lovers meet and what a world of feeling and tenderness is revealed in them! There are chance encounters in the courtyard, and Radha, who keeps her secret from her prying and inquisitive *sakhis*, conveys her message in a language which the lovers alone understand. Radha meets Krishna near the entrance door of her house. While he looks at her with hungry eyes, her eyes are veiled, and she stands still like a painted image, a picture of innocence, swayed by cross-currents of youthful passion and virgin modesty. We find her gazing at Krishna from the terrace, the windows and balconies of her home. With what elegance the artist shows the restlessness of her love!

Right : The waiting lover gets a glimpse of Radha who stands behind the lattice of her window. Judged by the expression of the woman at the door they seem to have already created a scandal. The evening with the golden sunset is rendered poetically.

The detail (immediate right) shows love-lorn Krishna looking at Radha. Below : The theme of this vignette in black and white is described in the text on this page. Vide (c).



Against the background of a paddy-field and her home stands the demure village beauty. Wearing a fillet, a garland decorating her rounded breast, holding a stick, stands she of the slender waist with downcast eyes unconscious of her innocent charm and beauty (a).

Clad in a white sari, the lovely girl is busy cooking. The beauty of her face and the charm of her personality have brightened up the kitchen (b).

Every time the dream of the moment is revealed in the expression on the faces of the lovers!

While others are present, the two lovers cannot meet. All she can do is to glance bashfully at Krishna with loving eyes (c).

The lovers stand in the balconies of their houses facing each other. Their fixed gaze has provided a rope on which their hearts dance like trapeze-artists (d).

The Kangra artist shows great skill in painting night scenes.

In one painting (not reproduced here) the night is pitch dark, and the lane is narrow. The lovers coming from opposite directions brush against each other and the light touch of their bodies enables them to recognise each other. How skilfully the artist has painted the inky sky resplendent with stars!

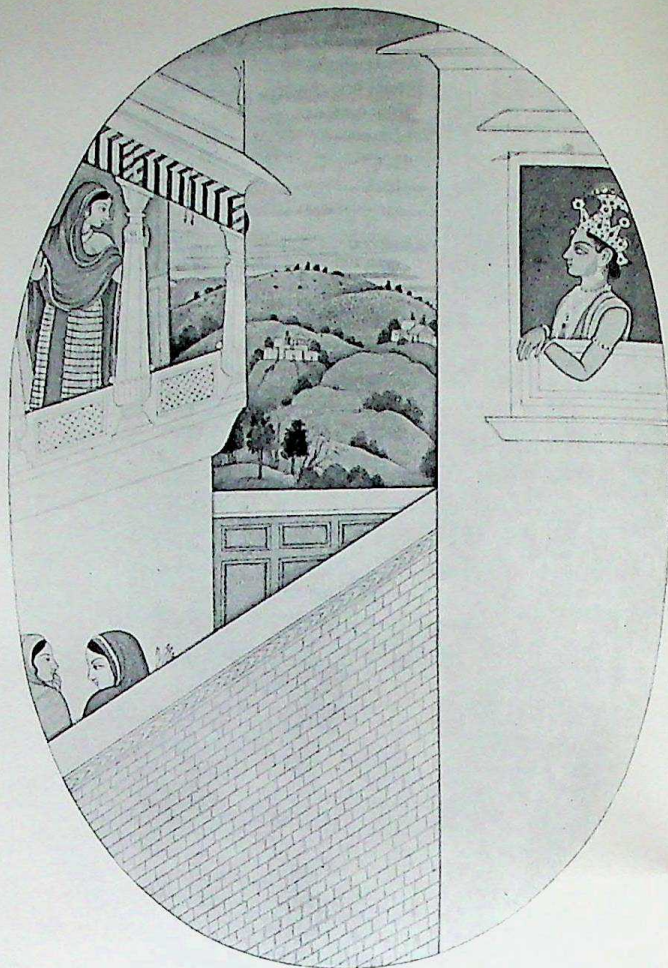
In another, clad in white, the lady goes out in moonlight to meet her lover. Only the fragrance of her body enables her *sakhi* to follow her. The white radiance of the moon and its pale silvery light has been painted with extraordinary skill by the artist.

Both poetry and painting are close to life in spirit and in Radha, Krishna, and their friends and playmates,

we find farmers and herdsmen of the Kangra Valley in their familiar surroundings of thatched cottages nestling on the spurs of mountains against the background of lakes and rivers.

Though it depicts the life of rustics, Kangra painting is not a folk art. It is essentially an aristocratic art. The Rajas who patronised the artists had a fine sensibility and good taste.

The *Gita Govinda* is a forest idyll, and in the Kangra paintings based on this poem the drama of the loves of Radha and Krishna is played in the forest or along the



river bank. In the paintings of the *Bhagavata Purana* the incidents in the life of the boy Krishna are depicted against the background of the forests of Vrindavana and the river Jamuna. In the Kangra paintings of the *Sat Sai* architecture provides the setting for the love drama of Radha and Krishna. Against the straight lines of the walls, the beauty of Radha's lovely form appears all the more striking.

The beauty of geometry is in harmony with the beauty of the female form in these paintings. Against the repose of the static architectural compositions we feel the restlessness

On Page 36—left (in colour):
It is evening; the cattle are in their
sheds; Krishna and Radha at last
get an opportunity of talking to each
other.

Right top: The balcony figures very
often in Kangra paintings. Vide (d)
on page 35. The Kangra artist paints
the houses with as much loving care
as the trees.

Below right: Krishna with his
playmates looks rapturously at a
bashful Radha as she pulls her orhni
(headcloth) over her head.

On this page: Krishna the cowherd
finds time to have a tete-a-tete with
Radha before he leads his herd back
home.

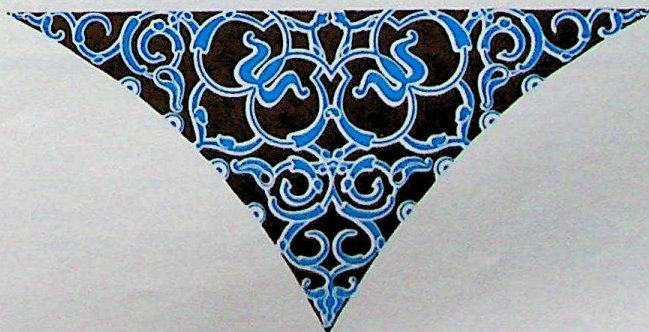
The lotus pond, the evening clouds and
the cow make it a pastoral idyll.

Figures of Radha and Krishna from
this picture are also shown separately
on page 28—with the appropriate
verse from Bihari Sat Sai.



of love. While the architectural setting has a delicate precision, the human figures have a fluid grace matching the elegance of a waterfall against the straight vertical lines of a mountain. With what gliding grace lovely ladies flit across courtyards! And always there is a pair of confidantes discussing the course of love of the divine couple. They are unhappy and have an expression of serious concern on their faces when there is a misunderstanding between the lovers, and they are never tired of coaxing, cajoling, or giving advice. When the course of love runs smoothly, they are unrestrainedly happy.

The knitting together of form and colour into a co-ordinated harmony is essential to all great art. In these Kangra paintings form and colour are so beautifully blended that the effect is like that of music. Their rhythmical line expresses both movement and mass and typifies what Blake admired and regarded as the golden rule of art as well as life, "that the more distinct, sharp and wiry the bounding line, the more perfect the work of art and the less keen and sharp, the greater is the evidence of weak imagination." What a beautiful rhythm the dancing line creates in the Kangra paintings of the *Sat Sai*!



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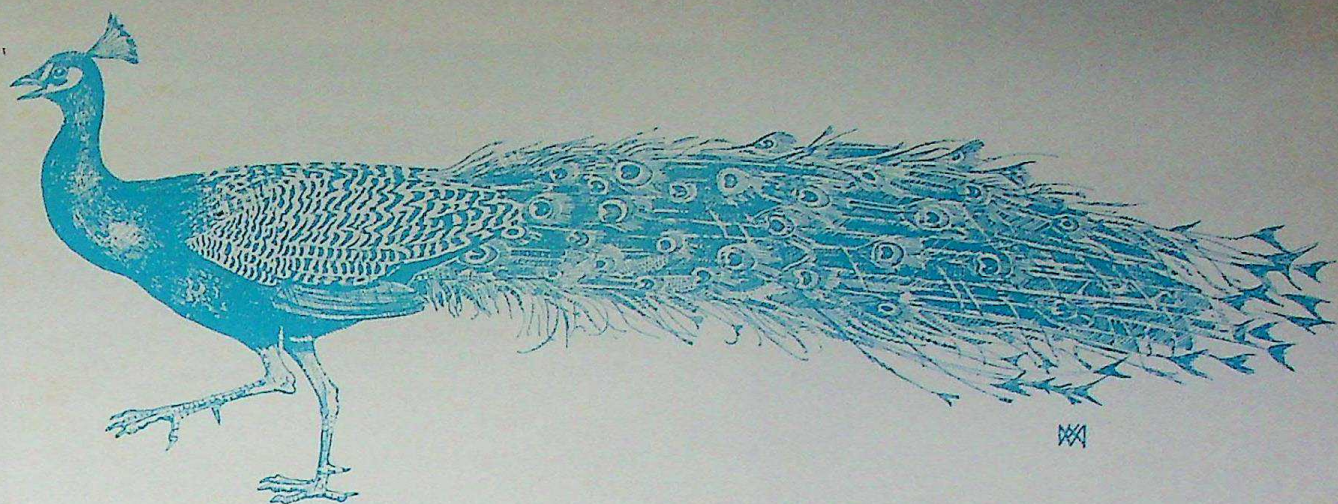
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Gateway House, 1 Watling St, London EC4.



FOR centuries, as most people know, the Indian peacock has been much prized in the West for its dazzlingly ornamental looks, and reared in a state of semi-domestication by the mansioned rich — perhaps the vogue attained its zenith in England during the Victorian period. But it may be news to some that the bird was greatly fancied and valued by the Greeks and Romans, and by even earlier civilizations in Arabia and Babylon. India's National Bird has long been admired, in remote countries.

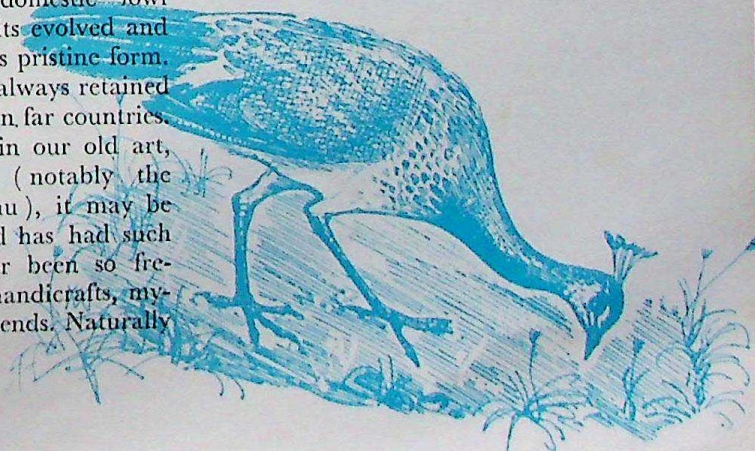
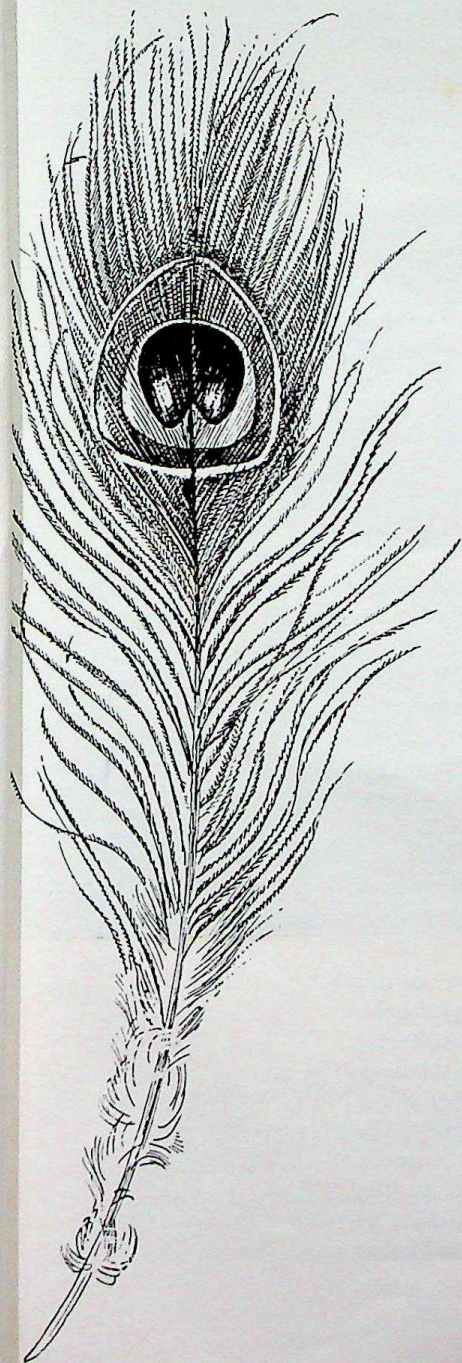
INDIA'S NATIONAL BIRD

By M. KRISHNAN

The drawings on this page are by the author.

It was the Indian peacock that was exported to distant lands in those old days. Peafowls are native to India, Ceylon and Burma; the Burmese bird belongs to a different species altogether, and has a spearhead-shaped crest unlike the Indian; it is the Indian species that is found in Ceylon. It was in ancient Greece that our peacock seems to have been most honoured abroad, for there it was held sacred; in its own home, of course, it has always been more honoured, for here it is the 'vahana' of Subramanya, and in South India (where the god is held in special reverence) the bird has always known protection and fame. The association between Subramanya and the peacock is so intimate that one of the names of the god is 'Mayilvahanan' — "he who rides the peacock" — and in Tamil devotional poetry the bird is frequently described and alluded to. In our classical art, too, the peacock has often been featured.

In fact, no other Indian bird has been so long and so widely celebrated abroad, if we except the domestic fowl — and the domestic fowl gained renown abroad only in its evolved and domesticated strains and not in its pristine form. The peacock, on the other hand, always retained its wild looks, even in captivity in far countries. And although other birds figure in our old art, traditions and sacred legends (notably the Garuda, the 'vahana' of Vishnu), it may be said that in India no other bird has had such wide renown as the peacock, or been so frequently featured in our art and handicrafts, mythology, religious poetry, and legends. Naturally





one would expect the bird symbol of a country to be widely, anciently, and intimately associated with its culture, and no happier choice than the peacock could have been made for our National Bird.

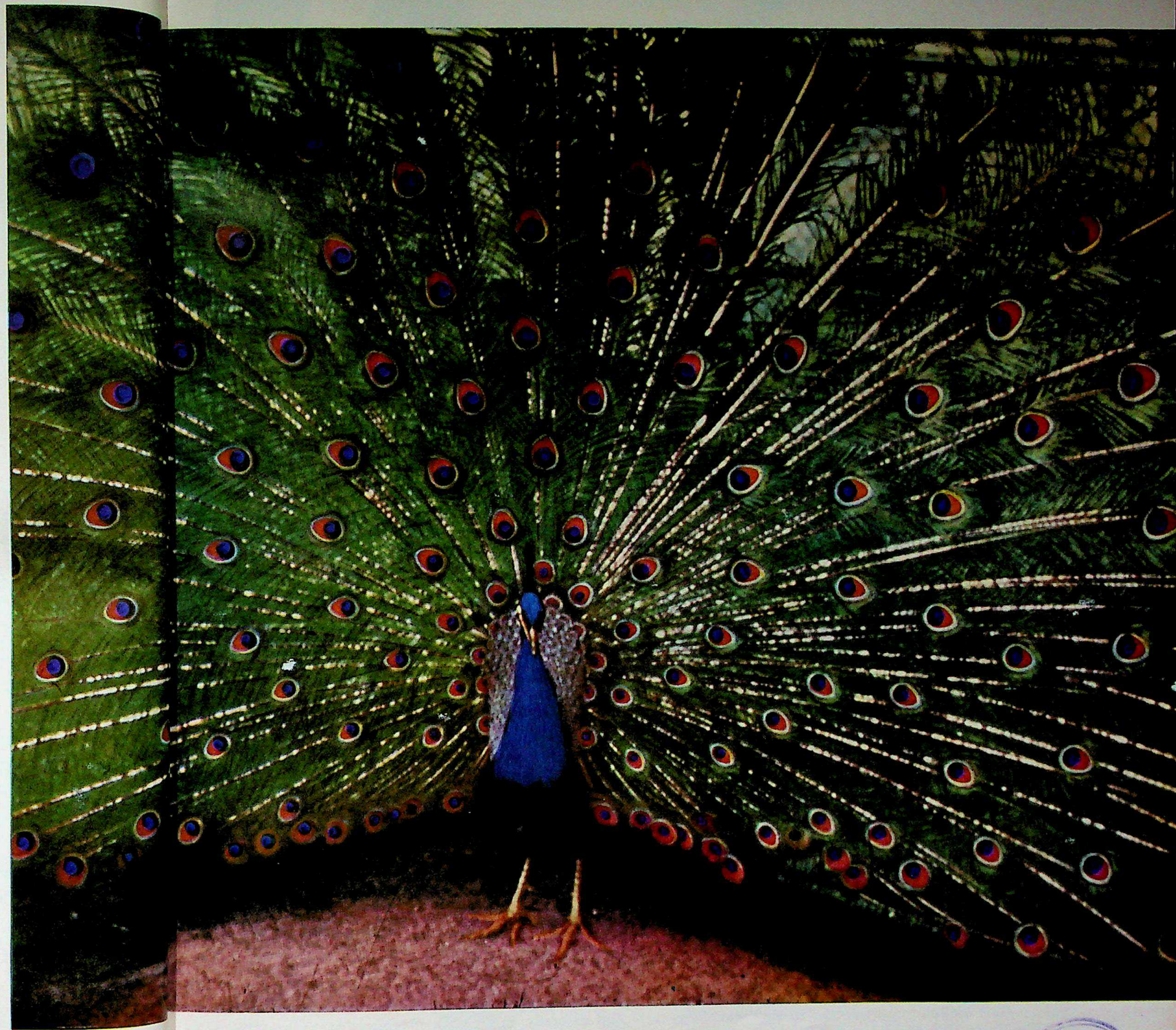
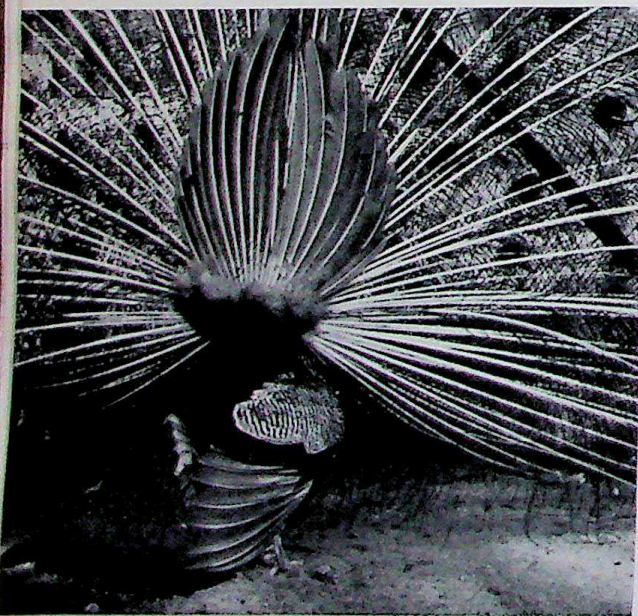
Here I may mention that some other Indian birds were also considered for the honour. Chief among them were the Brahminy Kite (popularly held to be the Garuda of Hindu mythology, though our classical iconography would seem to indicate the Crested Serpent Eagle, and though in places other raptorial birds are identified with the Garuda), the Great Indian Bustard, and the Sarus Crane. None of these is anywhere near as well-known as the peacock, here or abroad, or has its arresting beauty.

If the peacock were a less familiar bird, surely we would value its gorgeous looks more. It is human and natural to prize things that are rare and exotic. Exotic birds of paradise and macaws (the latter too flagrant in colouring and lacking in grace, to my eyes) are greatly admired by our pundits, and the superbly coloured trogons (which belong to our country) are superlatively beautiful, but the peacock is second to none in its looks. It is as brilliant in colour, as richly and wonderfully marked in plumage, and, in spite of its sturdy build, as graceful, as any bird can be. White peacocks have long been much fancied for their grace and the decorative charm of their plumage, in spite of their lack of colour.

Years ago a sustained attempt at evolving a melanoid variety, a black peacock, was made; it would have been a most magnificent bird, and if one is to judge by very dark varieties of homing pigeons, it would have retained the gorgeous iridescence of its neck and ocelli. But the fancy for white peafowl, and the attempt to evolve black, and possibly golden, varieties of the bird are only attempts to gild the lily; the peacock "as it is", with its opulent brilliance of colour and markings, is surely as beautiful as any colour variation of it can be! Incidentally, white peacocks seem to be a natural mutation; Sanderson mentions having seen a wild, white peacock in the Mysore jungles.

As everyone knows, it is not the tail of the peacock but its train (the elongated feathers just above the root of the tail) that is its chief glory. The tail (which supports the train) is clearly seen when the bird is displaying, or when it has shed its train, and is no different from the hen's tail. The brilliantly dark blue and green "eyes" on the train are visible even when the bird is not displaying, though it is when the cock has fanned out its train that the full, concentric loveliness of the ocelli is displayed. However, it is neither the striking colour of the ocelli nor the iridescence of the neck that has been featured in old stone and metal depictions of the bird, both in India and abroad, but the grace of its long, streaming train and the long, curved neck ending in the shapely head and the tasselled crest.

This is only natural. In stone and metal it is not possible to depict the iridescent colour of the peacock's "eyes" and neck — and perhaps it is just as well that this is so, for in later-day enamelled depictions of the bird, art has fallen sadly short of nature in the display of the ocelli on the fanned out train, being rococo almost to the point of crudeness; moreover, in the frontal view favoured by such depictions little justice has been done to the arched neck and proudly carried head. Incidentally, in realistic Western paintings of the peacock, the bird never

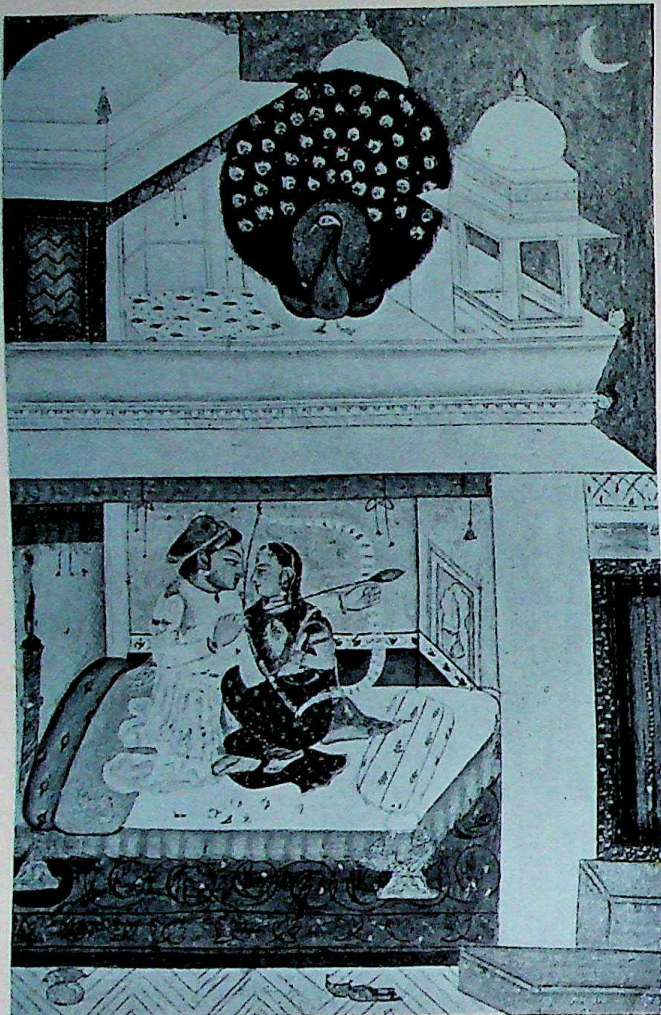


On page 40: (Top left) A peacock displaying the spread fan of the tail. The natural arrangement of the ocelli makes an interesting pattern.

Middle: A decorative panel of a peacock and peahens from the famed palace at Udaipur. The iridescence of the plumage and the neck is achieved by the use of coloured glass pieces.

Bottom: The front view conceals the wings and the conspicuous Zebra pattern on the wing coverts, as they are kept under and are thus hidden behind the train.

On this page: A peacock in all its splendour.



The peacock in a stylised form frequently figures in Indian art.

Left: A peacock in display on a terrace, in a Rajasthani Raga painting.

Above: A stone image of six-faced Skanda (Shanmukha) riding a peacock, his vehicle—XIIth-XIIIth century Chola.

On opposite page: (Left) A peacock perched on a branch of a tree. Peacocks can fly if forced to do so. (Right) A stone carving with a peacock motif similar to the one from Udaipur reproduced elsewhere, used as an architectural decoration, Victoria Terminus, Bombay. XIXth century. (Below) A peacock decoration in brass, mounted on a traditional oil lamp.



has the dazzling colour of life, in spite of the care with which the detail has been depicted; iridescence (which is such an important factor in the coloration of birds) is something these painstaking Western masters could not achieve. I think the peacocks shown in some Indian miniature paintings, though stylized and though incorrect in their drooping depiction of the train, are more peacock-like. The highly formalised peacock motif employed by our lac-workers and silk-weavers usually shows the bird displaying, and the few "eyes" on the outspread train are very tastefully arranged.

In our classical stone, our old anonymous master-carvers have skillfully exploited the strong, beautifully-balanced profile of the bird, and its fluent, horizontally-carried train. Those that have watched wild peafowl will know that the train (which is incredibly light, and supported by the tail) is not carried sweeping the ground but is lifted just clear, and that the carriage of the head on the slightly outstretched, slightly bent neck rivals the swan in grace. Our old artists have not been slow to appreciate the unmistakable identity and grace of the peacock in profile.

Metal figurines (usually made of brass or bell-metal,

and usually showing the bird displaying and wooden carvings on doorways were common decorative peacock motifs in the applied art of India till recently. Unfortunately, most of those doorways are now lost to us, having been replaced by more modern doorways in more modern, rebuilt houses, but I remember some from my boyhood. Ornamental silverware also frequently features the peacock, though not with any sure aesthetic or realistic feeling; in the South, rosewater sprinklers of silver, in the shape of a perched peacock with a pendent train (the rosewater was contained in the hollow train) were common a generation ago.

And naturally, in the days of princely pageantry the peacock was a much exploited bird. The peacock thrones of those days represent only one ornamental use of the morphology of the bird. In the courts of kings and chieftains here and abroad, peacock feathers were in great demand, and used in a variety of ways to enhance the pomp and pageantry of those colourful courts. In Tamil we have a saying that probably goes back to those days: "The peacock will not yield its plumes, however politely you request it." Or was this saying coined more recently by go-getters?

In our legends, the peacock is a famous serpent killer. Iconography seems to require that in formal depictions of Subramanya the peacock carrying him should have a vanquished snake beneath its feet. At the Throne Platform in Hampi the wall carvings (the finest and most authentic representations of the fauna and hunting methods of that period) feature a peacock holding a cobra in its beak. It is true that peacocks do occasionally kill small reptiles, including snakes, but as serpent killers they are not in the class of some of our eagles.

Originally, peafowl inhabited the foothills and plains forests of India. Most of those forests are now gone, having been occupied or cultivated by our ever-growing populations, or else denuded for the sake of wood and firewood. Peafowl are now to be found in our scrub jungles in the plains and foothills, sometimes in fairly barren, flat scrub, for instance in the Hagedal area on the present Mysore-Maharashtra border. They are also to be found in low-elevation hill-jungles.

One of the factors determining the distribution of wild peafowl is the presence of a stream to which they can have free access, or other perennial source of water. They



On this page : (Above) Another decorative peacock panel from Udaipur Palace in its entire setting. (Below) A peacock normally prefers to run away from danger. Here it is seen coming out of its hideout.

On opposite page: (Top) A peacock in captivity. (Below right) A white peacock displaying.

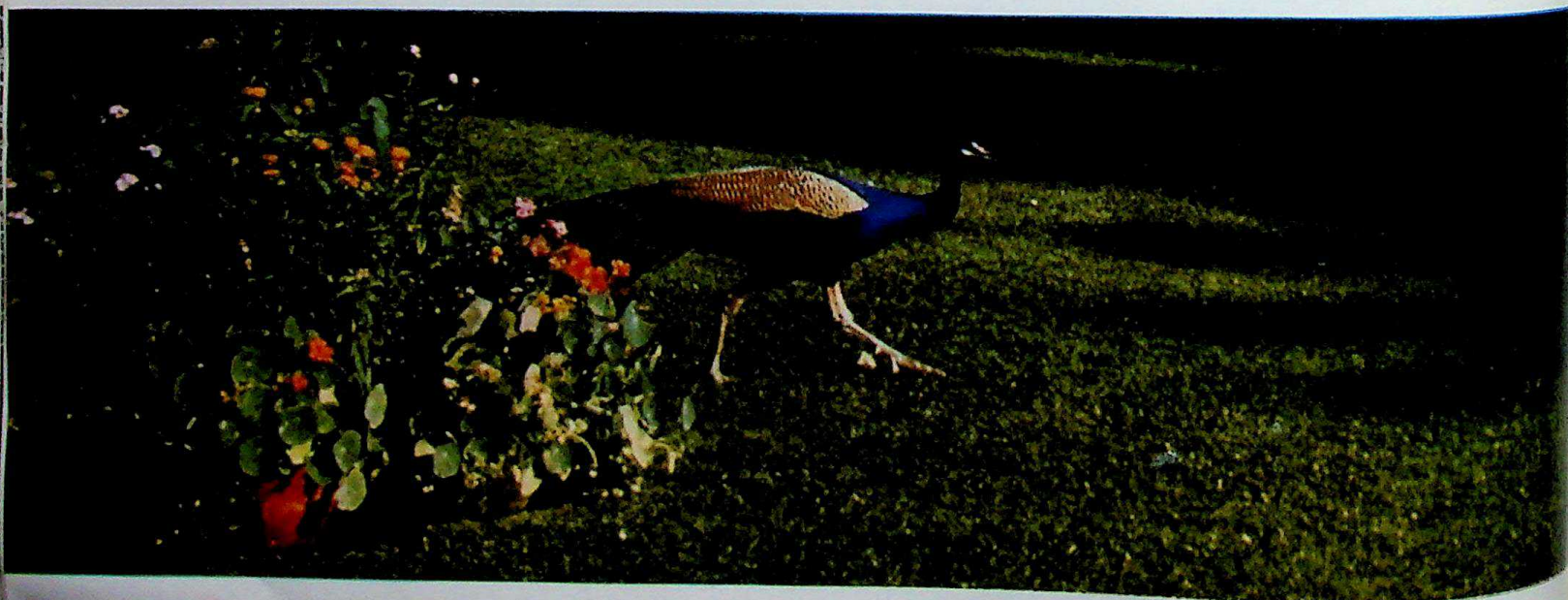
are thirsty birds and troop down to the water regularly to drink, after first making sure that no predators are lurking in the offing.

They are great wanderers and walk miles each day in quest of the mixed fare on which they thrive. Many flowers and buds, some fruits and seeds, insects, and occasionally small reptiles all go to sustain wild peafowl. They are ground birds, and nest on the ground, the nest being little more than a scrape in some well-sheltered spot. When disturbed they normally prefer to run away from danger, trusting their sturdy legs in preference to their broad wings. However, they can and do flap and sail through the air for some distance when they have to, as when crossing a nullah or river, or when closely pressed. After flying about a hundred yards they drop to earth again and disappear into bush cover. I have noticed that when disturbed, they are much more prone to take wing in the hill jungles than in flat scrub, and cannot say why this should be so, unless it is that they do not trust their legs on undulating ground, or very steep ground.

Once I had to share a compound with a peahen and her five chicks and the behaviour of the chicks, and the readiness of their mother to attack my poor dog in needless defence of her young, never failed to amuse me. The chicks were only about 6 weeks old when I moved into their territory, and I spent a month with them. They had well-developed crests when I saw them first, and almost doubled in size in the month I watched them. The young cocks (there were two of them) were distinguishable from their sisters by their larger size and more aggressive behaviour, though they were otherwise similar. They were already willing to strut and posture in immature display, though their trains had not begun to develop. It takes about three years for a peacock to develop its train fully, and the train is about 5-foot long then.

Semi-domestic peafowl swallow small, round bits of gravel along with their food, and these seem to be retained in their gizzard, for they are not voided with the droppings. No doubt the wild bird also does so, and the stones help in digesting and crushing the hard seeds they eat.

A full-grown peacock is a tough and wary bird, armed





with strong spurs — only the cocks develop these spurs, which are used in intra-specific combats. Wild peafowl are singularly shy of men, but captive birds are apt to be less respectful, and to attack men aggressively on occasion, flying up at the intruder and striking out at the face with their spurs — they will also peck at him. *Experto crede* — the mature male of captive peafowl can be distinctly dangerous!

Peafowl have very keen sight, and unlike many of the animals that sound an alarm at the sight of predators, can make out their enemy even when it is staying quite still. The alarm call is hard to describe in words — it is deeper and more urgent than the repeated, loud 'peahan . . . pechan' which they sound in the evening before roosting. They are strictly diurnal birds, and at nightfall flap their way up to some tall tree to roost, a bare branch being much preferred. For this reason they are not to be found occurring naturally in areas where there are no suitable roosting trees.



In nature, the peacock has many enemies. Wild dogs occasionally surprise them (I have seen peacock feathers in the faeces of a wild dog), and so do leopards, and many smaller predators, such as jungle cats and the larger mongooses, and the larger eagles, also prey on peafowl. Religious sentiment has protected peafowl from men in our country, but in other countries peacock-pie was often a favourite dish at the more ceremonious feasts. However, the advent of the less tough and more tasty turkey has saved the peacock in the West. In India, many people still fancy peacock for dinner, though they may not, out of regard for popular sentiment, eat it in public. Perhaps it is the bar that is the attraction — “Stolen waters are sweet and bread eaten in secret is pleasant” !

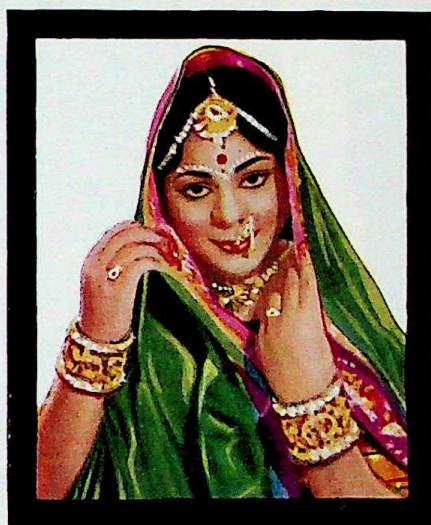
In many parts of the Indian countryside, people believe that the peacock loves rain, and that it is in joy that it dances, when the first rains come. I suppose the rain does mean much to such a thirsty bird, and it is true that the hens seem singularly unnoticing when their strutting overlord displays before them; moreover, it is also true that peacocks will stage their display before other animals, and even inanimate objects. However, I think their display, one of the most spectacular courtship displays in nature, does have a dominantly sexual significance. That the hens seem quite indifferent to the spectacle means nothing — that is the way of their sex all over the world !



A peacock about to display.



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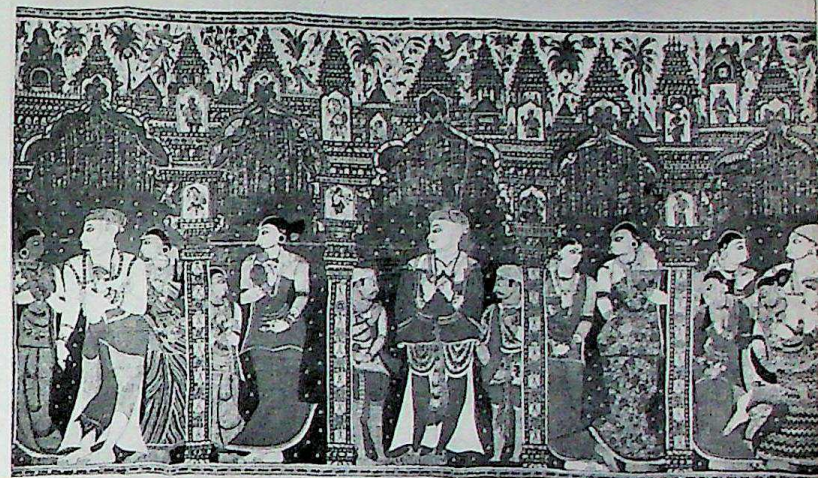


Golconda cotton paintings are broadly classified into three groups. I. European, II. Indo-Persian, and III. Hindu.

Left: A wall hanging made under European patronage: about 1640 A.D.

Below: Detail of a hanging made for a Hindu patron. Such pieces are very rare now.

Bottom: Detail of a hanging with an Indo-Persian motif: about 1630 A.D.



GOLCONDA COTTON PAINTINGS

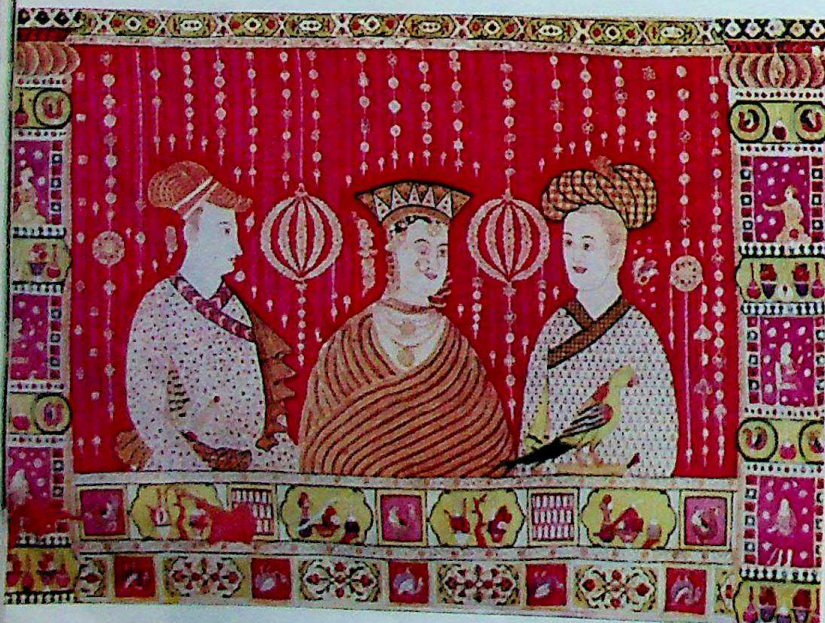
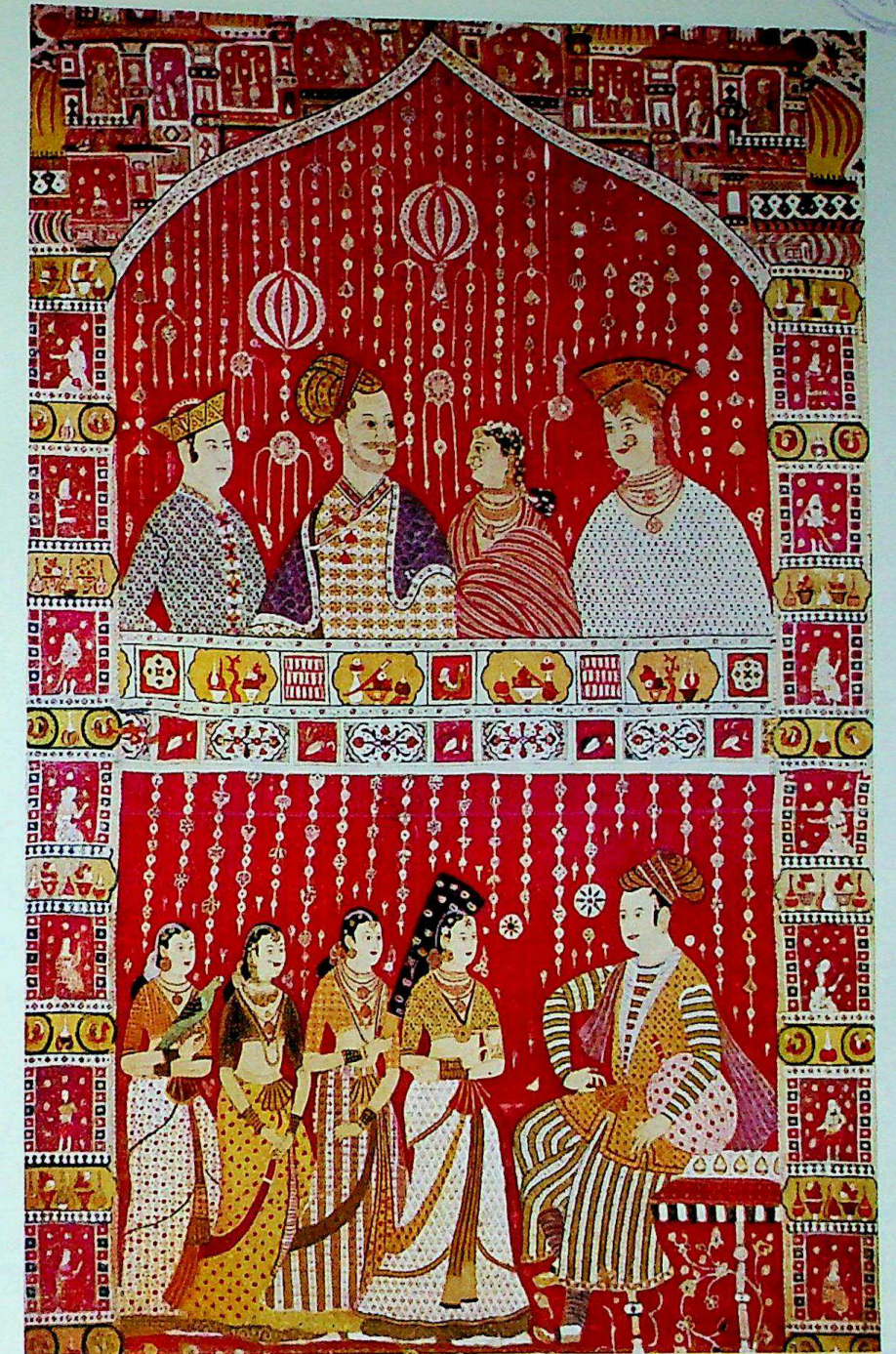
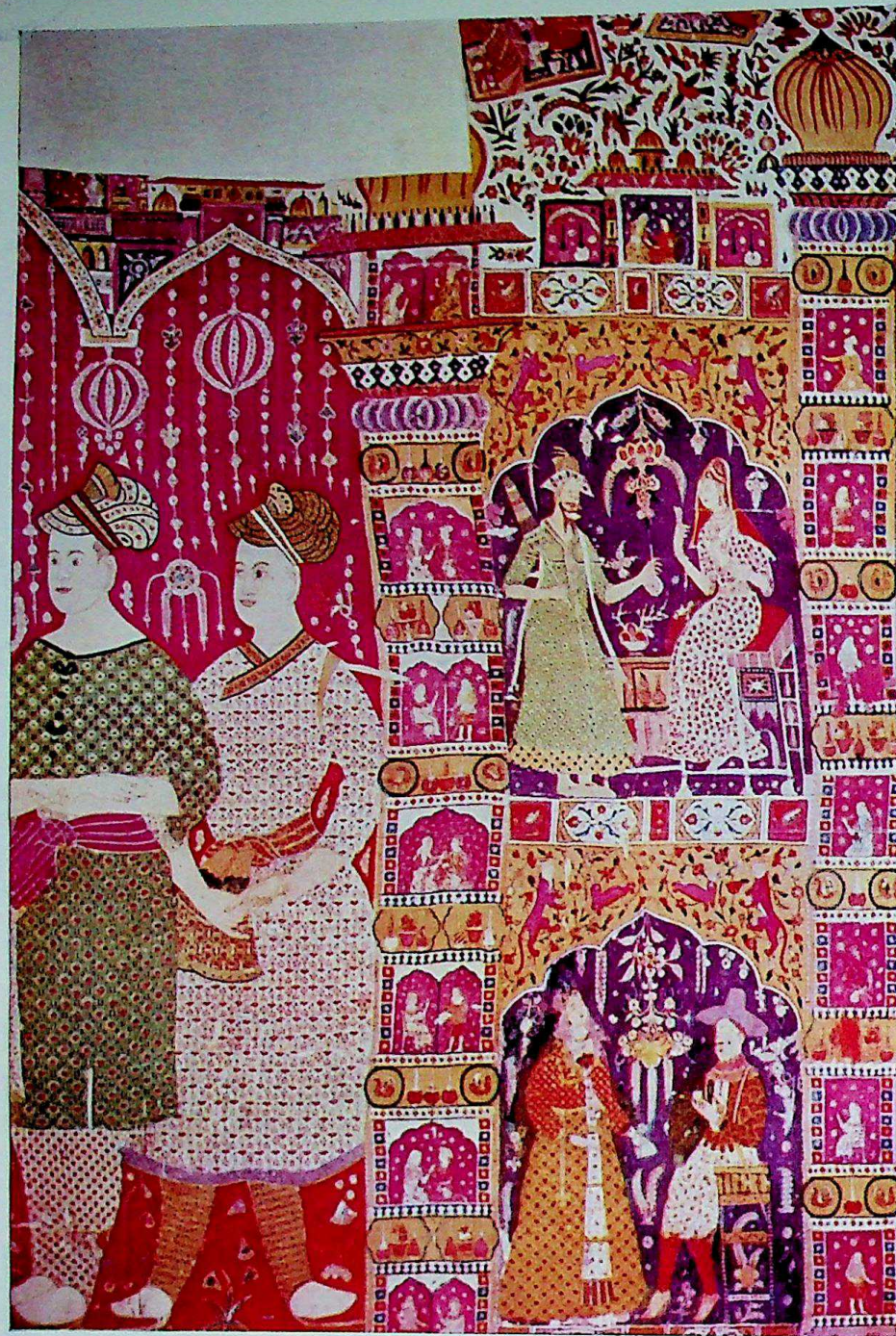
by JOHN IRWIN

FROM ancient times, India was famed for her textiles and in particular for the beauty and permanence of her dyed fabrics. So universally recognised was India's pre-eminence in this field that when St. Jerome, in his fourth-century translation of the Bible, had to render from the Book of Job an obscure passage about the lasting value of wisdom, he wrote that the permanence of wisdom was such that it could be compared "with the dyed colours of India".

It is one of the ironies of our historical knowledge that although the fact of India's pre-eminence in cotton-dyeing was beyond dispute, we know next to nothing about the fabrics themselves until about a thousand years later.

The unique interest and importance of the Golconda school of cotton-painting, which flourished in the neighbourhood of Masulipatam on the Andhra coast in the early seventeenth century, is that it is the oldest school of fine cotton-painting with enough surviving examples to give us a coherent view of what India could achieve in this field, and why it was so much admired by the rest of the world. Even so, the threads of evidence are still somewhat slender, for among all the museums of the





world there are hardly twenty fabrics altogether which witness the achievements of this school at its best.

In the early seventeenth century, when the Golconda school was most famed, India was still the only country in the world which could dye *vegetable* fibre (that is cotton, as distinct from linen) in fast and luminous colours, so that when the fabric was washed those colours increased, rather than diminished, in beauty and subtlety. Moreover, such Indian fabrics had the additional advantage of being extraordinarily cheap in terms of contemporary trade values.

Indian craftsmen achieved their technical mastery of cotton-dyeing after long experience with mordants, which were chemical agents used in fixing the dye and ensuring that it penetrated the fibres instead of remaining only on the surface where it could be washed off. The method of application is more accurately described as *painting*

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Top on page 50-51: A complete textile hanging in three sections showing members of the royal family and nobility in scenes of revelry. Although belonging to the Indo-Persian group it has a few panels which depict contemporary European figures.

Left on page 50: A detail of the above. A queen with princes watching a parrot.

Left on page 51: Another detail: A prince enjoying a drink in the company of his consort.

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rather than *printing*, and the distinction implied is important to recognise. Although both processes stem from the same science of dyeing, the former is incomparably more skilled and offers much greater possibilities of design than the other. *Printing* implies the use of some sort of block for the impression of outline and dye-mordants, and by its nature such a technique limits effects of patterning to some sort of symmetrical repeat. *Painting*, on the other hand, involves transference of design direct from paper to cloth by means of stencil; and in this way the artisan is not limited to a repeat-pattern but can reproduce the outlines of a free-hand drawing and complete his final effects with a brush. Thus, to the cotton-painter as distinct from the *printer*, there is virtually no element of mechanical transference. To him, each design is a fresh creation expressing directly the sensuous touch.

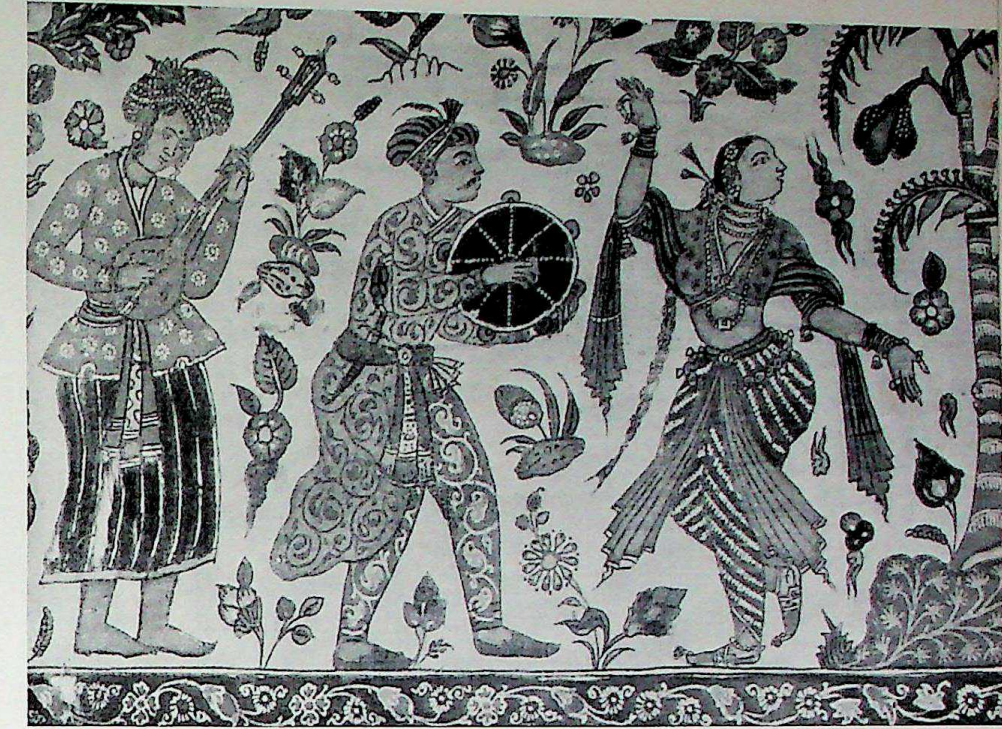
Since the technical knowledge of dye-chemistry was empirically acquired over a long period, and as part of slowly-accumulated tradition, dependent upon specific

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qualities in the raw materials locally available, it followed that the roots of any given style of cotton-painting within India were geographical as well as aesthetic. Even the same dye-plant grown in one set of soil conditions would not produce exactly the same dye qualities when grown in another, or when combined with the different mineral properties of another water. It would be impossible, for instance, to confuse a Golconda cotton-painting with contemporary work from Madras or Rajasthan.

All the known cotton-paintings of the Golconda school were made either at Petaboli, a village 40 miles southwest of Masulipatam, or at Palakollu, about 80 miles to the north. The contemporary trade name "Masulipatam chintz" was actually a misnomer, since Masulipatam itself was not at this period a producing centre but simply the port or emporium where goods made in the hinterland could be bought or contracted. The quality of the red tones in Golconda cotton-paintings was regarded as unique, and this derived from the superiority of local madder which grew wild on the beaches at the mouth



Left top on page 52: Detail: Three women in a garden. Although this hanging belongs to the Indo-Persian group some of the objects in it show Christian and Hindu influence. There is a cross and a chalice on the box seen above the central figure.

Below left on page 52: A Japanese copy of a Jesuit engraving, 1630 A.D. This type of Golconda cotton painting was made under European influence. For comparison see the picture on the left of page 49.

Middle: Detail: Lovers in a garden with birds, butterflies, animals and trees.

Above: Detail: A dancer accompanied by musicians playing khanjiri (tambourine) and a stringed instrument against a decorative background.

of the Kistna delta. The same plant, when transplanted further south to the Madras region, failed to produce comparable results. Local craftsmen knew intuitively that this had something to do with the high shell-content of the sand near the Kistna delta. A modern dye-chemist would at once confirm this connection by explaining the properties of calcium as an agent in ensuring the penetration of madder-type dyes.

The reason why the Golconda school of cotton-painting reached its peak of fame in the first half of the seventeenth century may be explained by the particular conditions of trade which flourished at that time. Between 1605 and 1611 both the Dutch and English East India Companies opened trading stations on the Andhra coast, and although they were not at this stage interested in buying Indian goods for the European market, they were nevertheless much in need of suitable Indian textiles to use as articles of barter for spices in the Malayan Archipelago. It was a three-cornered trade, in which ships first sailed from Europe to India with bullion; in India they

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Above: A textile piece showing a garden with a pavilion and figures.

Above right: A detail from the textile reproduced on pages 50-51. Love scenes are a popular theme with Golconda textile designers.

Right: Another detail from the same: A prince with his consorts.

Below right: Detail: A decorative garden scene with figures.

exchanged the bullion for cotton piece-goods, and then took the piece-goods to the spice islands where they were bartered for spices for the return journey to Europe. (Bullion could not be used to buy spices in the first place, because the primitive economy of the spice islands had no use for it.)

European traders were quick to recognise that the painted-cotton piece-goods produced at Petaboli and Palakollu were very superior in quality to those available in the Madras region, which had previously served as the main source of supply. Moreover, at Petaboli and Palakollu they could be obtained 30 per cent cheaper than when bought from middlemen at Masulipatam, and accordingly both the Dutch and English kept factors at both villages.

These arrangements were undoubtedly a great stimulus to local production, but they did not work smoothly for long. In 1636, the English complained in a letter to the Directors of the East India Company in London that supplies were falling off "... the which paintings in former times were procured near Masulipatam; which (as it seems) was before the Great Mogul and Persian took so great affection unto fine paintings; but after that they delighted therein, the said places adjacent Masulipatam were wholly taken up for their use, with command from the King of Golconda (whose country it is) that the painters should work only for them."



Above: Detail: Another decorative panel with trees, birds and animals.

Above right: Detail from the reproduction on pages 50-51. A prince with his consorts, with floral hangings in the background.

Middle right: Detail: Another garden scene with figures against a decorative background of birds, trees, flowers, etc.

Below right: Another piece of textile showing a garden scene with figures.



The reason why the 'King of Golconda' intervened was not only because of the role of his court as consumer, but also because he and his nobles had stakes in the Persian trade. Fine cotton-paintings were increasingly in demand in Persia, especially in the form of floor-spreads, bedspreads and coat-linings. In exchange, Golconda needed horses, a regular supply of which was necessary for state security on account of the importance of cavalry in contemporary military tactics and the fact that good horses had a comparatively short life in the Deccan. Ships under Golconda charter left the Persian Gulf laden with horses in April each year and arrived at Masulipatam in May or June. There they waited six months while textiles were commissioned and returned to Persia at the end of the same year. The well-known French traveller Tavernier first reached India in 1652 in one of these ships; and if anyone should wonder why the rulers of Golconda sought to monopolise the services of cotton-painters, we have Tavernier's evidence that the total production of fine work was so small that "when one makes requisition of all the workers who manufacture these cotton cloths it is with difficulty that he can obtain as much as three bales."

The comparatively few Golconda hangings which survive and are preserved in museums in different parts of the world fall into three main groups, corresponding to the markets for which they were originally commissioned: (1) Indo-Persian, (2) European, and (3) Hindu.

The 'Indo-Persian' group includes those intended to meet the tastes of the Persianized courts of India as well as those for sale in Persia itself. In fact, there is no means of distinguishing these two sub-categories. Scenes of drinking and debauchery are characteristic of them and are probably a fair reflection of the tastes and habits of the Safavid court at Isfahan as well as those of the Deccan rulers. Muhammad Quli Qutb Shah of Golconda (1580-1611), who was said to have had four wives and a thousand concubines, married one of his daughters to Shah Abbas the Great, and between 1603 and 1609 kept an embassy of a hundred Persians at his court. Drinking habits at his court are reflected in a letter written by the English factors at Masulipatam in 1634 to the effect that Canary wine was one of the most profitable imports, "of better esteem among most of the nobility at court than to give five times its value in anything else."

The "European" group is composed of pieces which were almost certainly privately commissioned by individual traders to take home as gifts or articles of private trade. Although there was not yet any bulk demand for fine Indian cotton-paintings in Europe, there was an insatiable demand among the rich and fashionable for anything which could be regarded as an exotic curiosity. The very fanciful imagination of the Golconda cotton-painter was admirably suited to provide material of this kind. It amused them, and pandered to the vanity of their patrons, to include in their designs anecdotes of European traders luxuriating in an atmosphere of exotic grandeur, being carried in palanquins with trains of servants and attendants, or holding court in the style of a native potentate.

Rarest among those surviving are hangings made for Hindu courts (only one good example of which is known to exist), and this is perhaps due to their comparatively small chance of survival in the South Indian climate. We may reasonably assume, however, that at this period the Golconda cotton-painters were supplying hangings for Hindu temples.

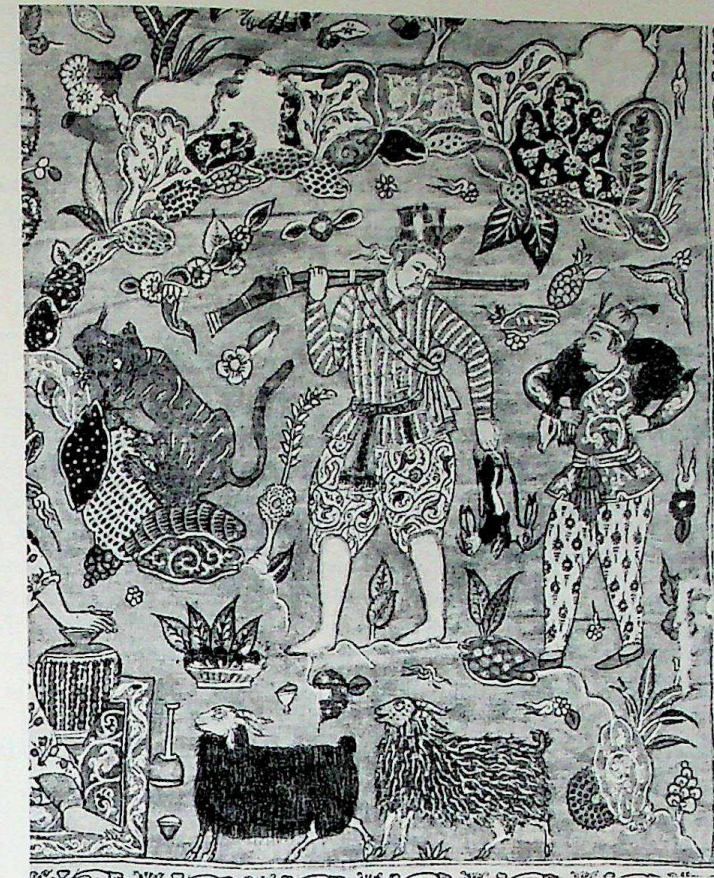
From scattered literary sources, we can piece together a fairly clear picture of the kind of people who made these hangings and the conditions in which they worked. In the first place, it is a shock to know that craftsmen of such brilliant achievement, far from living in dignity appropriate to the fineness of their work, were among the most oppressed and poverty-stricken artisans it is possible to imagine. In some respects their conditions were similar to those prevailing among surviving groups of cotton-painters in India today (for instance, the Vaghri Harijan families who still work in the bustee areas of Ahmedabad producing temple-cloths by a combination of painting and printing techniques).

They were caste Hindus working on a joint-family basis. Between one joint-family and another there was considerable division of labour, and there is no reason to suppose that any hanging was necessarily executed by the same hands through all stages from start to finish. The Dutchman Havart, writing about the cotton-painters of Palakollu in the 1680's, said that there were "four kinds of painters, who each have according to their family a special name. Between these is divided the demand, and they put out the work again to those of lower rank who do the work." Here he is describing a



Above: Detail: A garden scene with two figures. One is carrying a flower pot while the other, a negroid figure, is watching a parrot.

Below: Detail: A group of Europeans engaged in activities similar to those of Indian princes. In the lower panel a small boy is dancing before his European patron and his attendants.



Left: Detail: A hunter with a musket is accompanied by his squire carrying the kill. A tiger is seen attacking its prey.



Below: Detail: A Hindu chieftain sitting on a throne attended by his retinue. A cloth whisk is used by the attendant to keep away flies and mosquitoes.



procedure common even today in the Indian handicraft industry, whereby one family, having undertaken to supply a complete article, sub-contracts for certain specialised operations in the manufacture. For instance, one family might have done the initial drawing, another the waxing, a third the indigo-dyeing, and so on.

The living conditions of the cotton-painters were primitive, and the actual scene of operation was usually the bank of a dried-up river-bed (dyeing operations could be carried on only in the 'dry' season, all work ceasing with the monsoons). Three months was usually the minimum period between the commissioning of a hanging and its delivery as a finished article. Havart described the work as going on "very slowly, like snails which creep on and appear not to advance. Yes, he who would wish to depict Patience would need no other object than such a painter of Palakollu." Another witness, John Fryer, described the actual painting being done "by little children as well as elder grown, they stretching the piece on the ground, and sitting upon them, run them over with a dexterity and exactness peculiar to themselves."

Another point stressed by contemporary observers is that the cotton-painters always had to be given musters to copy. Somewhat arrogantly, Havart wrote that "their

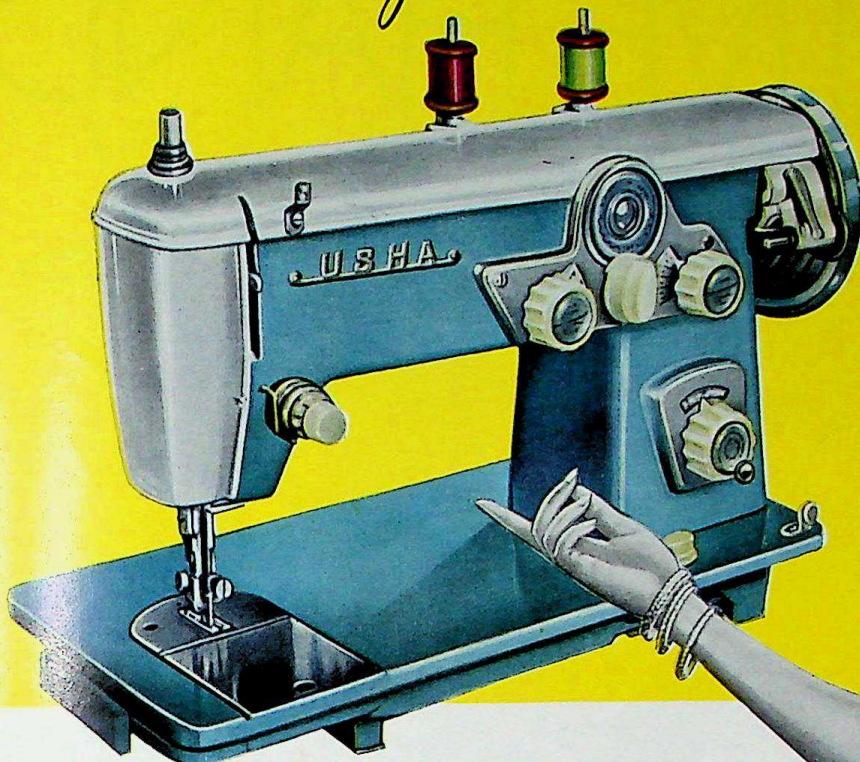
national character is so stupid that they cannot imagine anything by themselves but can only imitate something so that it has a complete likeness." In fact, Havart was plainly wrong in this statement, for there is no evidence that musters were copied *exactly*. On the contrary, it is clear that the cotton-painter demanded musters only that they should give him a guide and starting-point to work from, rather as a musician might take somebody else's theme as a basis for his own invention. Invariably he adapted the material "after his own manner" (a significant phrase recurring in English trade records of the period).

The cotton-painters could not have known or understood the tastes and fashions of foreign markets, and therefore some initial guidance was essential. It is unlikely, however, that such musters were complete designs in themselves. Usually they consisted only of incidental and unrelated figure-groups which the cotton-painter incorporated as subordinate elements in designs of his own decorative conception. Thus, no matter how hybrid or eclectic were individual elements in the design, they were transcended by a decorative style which owed nothing directly to foreign inspiration. It was precisely *this* contribution which gave the Golconda school of cotton-painting its individuality and distinction.



Detail: A floral design.

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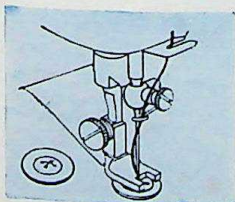


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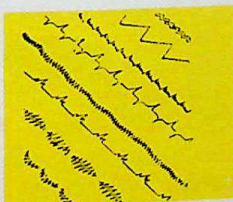
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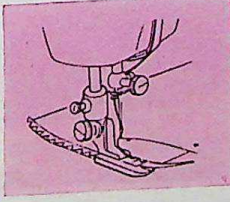
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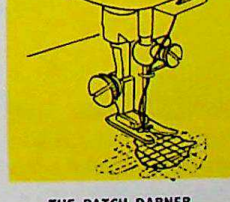
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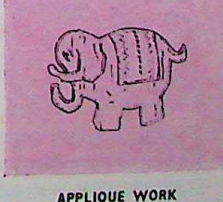
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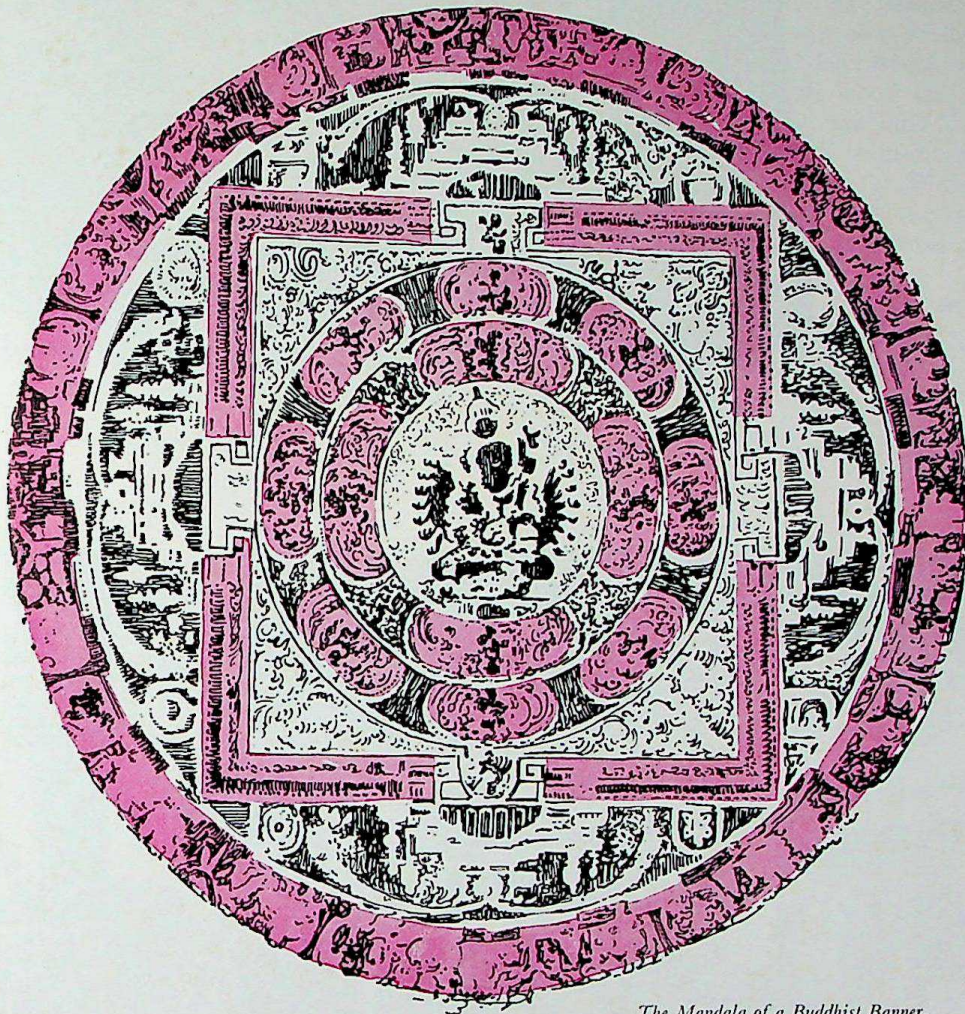
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The Mandala of a Buddhist Banner.

THE INDIAN GARDEN

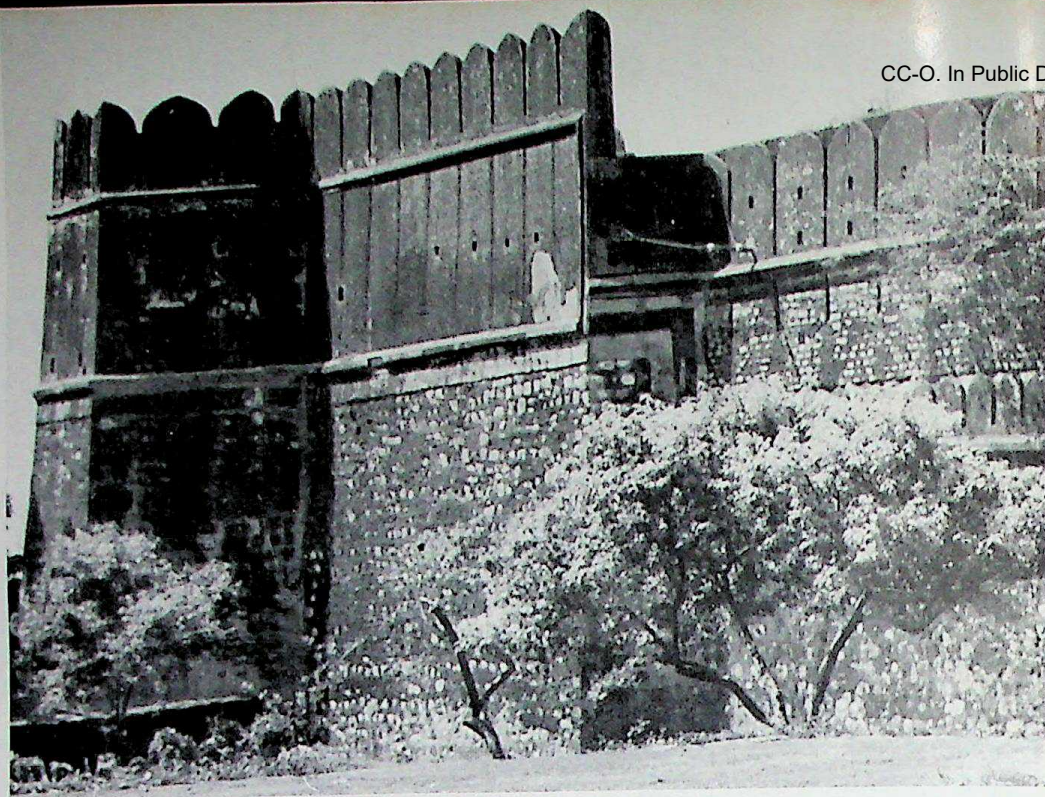
By DHARAM JIT SINGH

THE classic Indian garden fuses natural beauty and formal architecture in a manner not to be found anywhere else. Its intriguing union of mathematical planning and poetic imagination is not haphazard. It derives its uniqueness from three factors.

The first factor is the climate. "The garden in India", Bernier wrote, "is not like any other in the East or in Europe. Its magnificence is suited to the climate." It is the climate which dictates that the sun should fall once a day on all four corners of the garden, that there should be shade trees for coolness, that flowering bushes be married to plain evergreens by positioning them in the canonical manner and that there should be paved paths, geometrically planned, for walks during the rains and at night.

The second factor is the marriage of science and art. The planning of Indian gardens on the classic model has two divisions: the study of sites and soils is a science; the laying out of parks and flower carpets is an art. The conflict between science and art is resolved at a level of utter simplicity or of ultimate sophistication. Before the garden designer can attain to such a level he must be himself an integrated man.

The mandala or the yantra (machine) is the third factor which has influenced the classic Indian garden. The yantra is in fact the mandala reduced to its essential form. For the initiate the mandala is a symbol of the long process that led Gautama to the state where he became the Buddha. For the rest of us, the mandala, specially in the shape of the classic



garden, is akin to subliminal advertising; only there is nothing to sell and there is no message apart from one of inner peace.

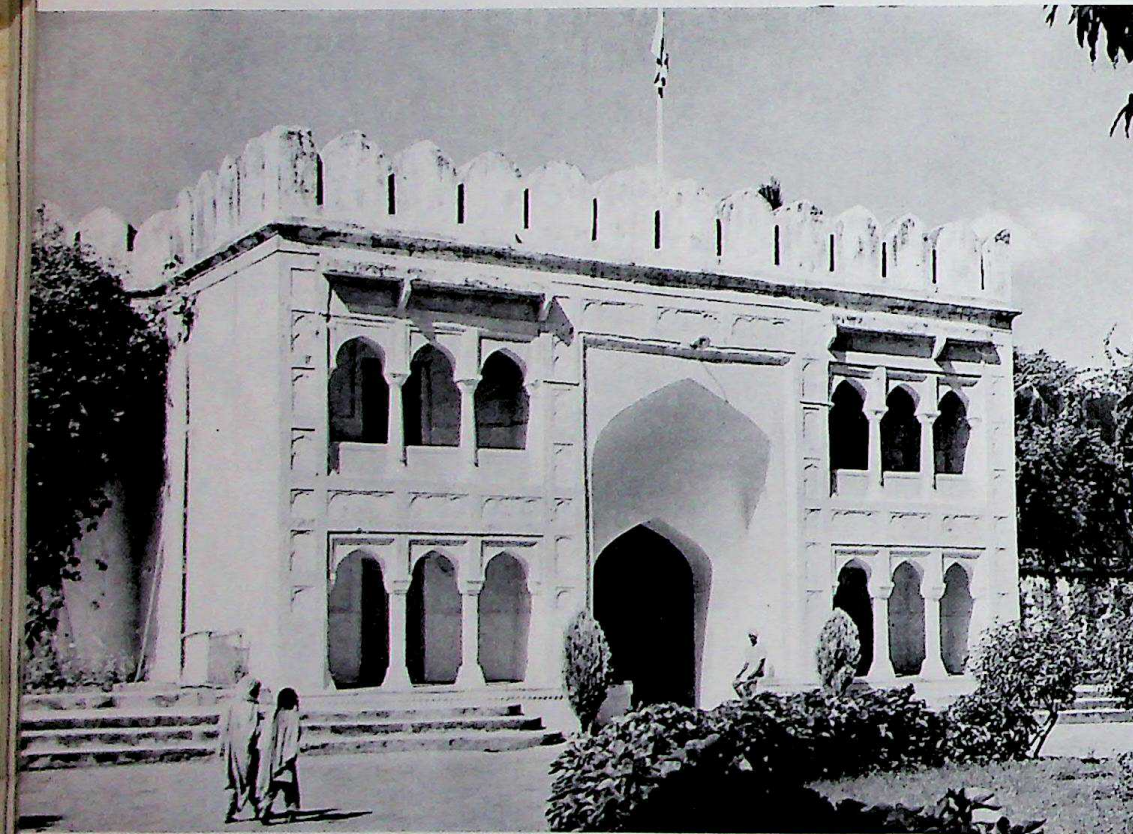
The Buddhist banner carries a mandala. Its overall design consists of an eight-petalled lotus surrounded by a square with four principal entrances. There are lotus circles and a border or rim of fire. This is the limit proper of a painted mandala, and the heart of the mandala is in the exact centre. The design of many Indian gardens is based on these Buddhist banners.

The patterns of the mandala are not peculiar to any particular country or race. They are 'photostats' of what Jung calls the 'Collective Unconscious', and the Vedas describe as 'Stored Consciousness.' At this level we are all one. A garden built according to such a pattern represents the universe as well as the individual psyche. Because it is based on an archetypal form, it is beautiful; as it is an architectonic representation of Shakti, it is also profoundly arresting.

The classic Indian garden partakes of the mandala design and displays its qualities of timelessness and freedom from all tension and conflict. Its aim is to heal and bring peace of heart and calm of mind. This rather than aesthetic or visual beauty is its *raison d'être*.

Classical Sanskrit literature is full of descriptions of gardens. Asvaghosh in his *Saundarananda* speaks of the founding of Kapilvastu as a garden city. "Laying out a space like a chessboard which was beautified by boundary marks, the Seer stood still and said to the princes, 'build a town on this land'.... They founded through their knowledge of town-planning on that site a town which was majestic.... Without orders from anyone but only because of their exceeding wisdom they made in all directions pleasant lotus ponds filled with water."

In the cycle of stories of Vikramaditya, we read, "There shone a glittering garden... adorned with mango, champak and ashoka trees... full of cuckoos."



Top: The crenellated outer walls of the Pinjor Gardens built by Fadaï Khan, a Moghul general, in the XVII century A.D.

Above: The main gate at Pinjor leading to the gardens and the first Mandala.

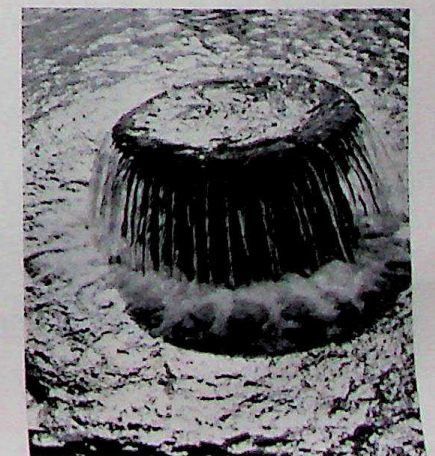
Right: The Pinjor Gardens were built on the site of ruins dating back to the VI century A.D. These sculptures are from a former temple garden.

Middle right: Detail of the sculptures below.



Above: A water-course with a pavilion in the background, Pinjor.

Right: The natural fresh water spring at Pinjor is enclosed in a sculptured cover of black stone, a "purna kalsha".



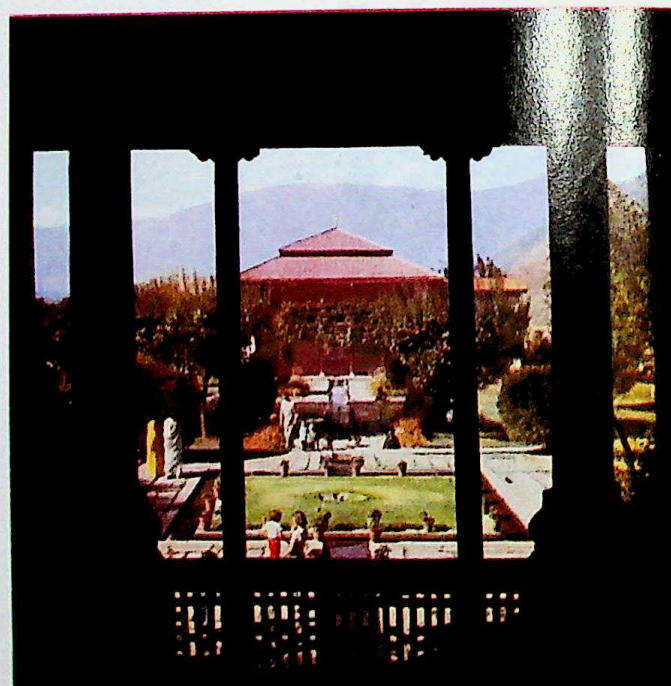
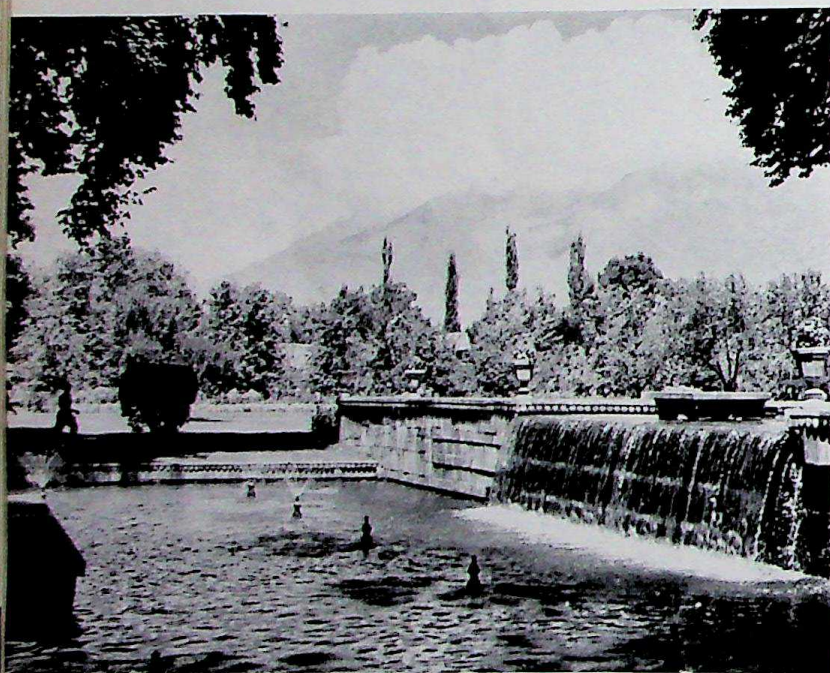
On this and the opposite page pictures in colour, and black and white, show different gardens of earlier and modern periods, which are usually a variation on the Mandala—the basic pattern for gardens in India.

On this page: Top right: A spouting fountain in the Rashtrapati Bhavan Gardens, New Delhi.

Middle right: A vista of the Chashmashahi Gardens, Srinagar, a Moghul garden built by Emperor Shahjahan.

Bottom right: A water-course in the Nishat Gardens, Srinagar, another famous Moghul garden built at the imperial command of Empress Nurjahan by her brother Asaf Khan.

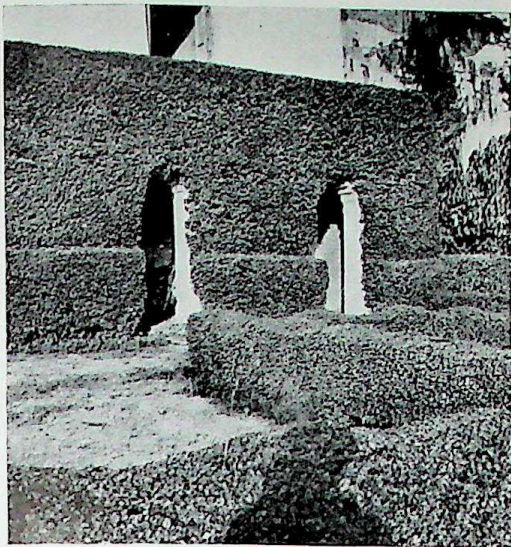
Below in black and white: The cascade and fountains in the Shalimar Gardens, Srinagar, the third of the famed Moghul gardens and built by Emperor Jehangir.



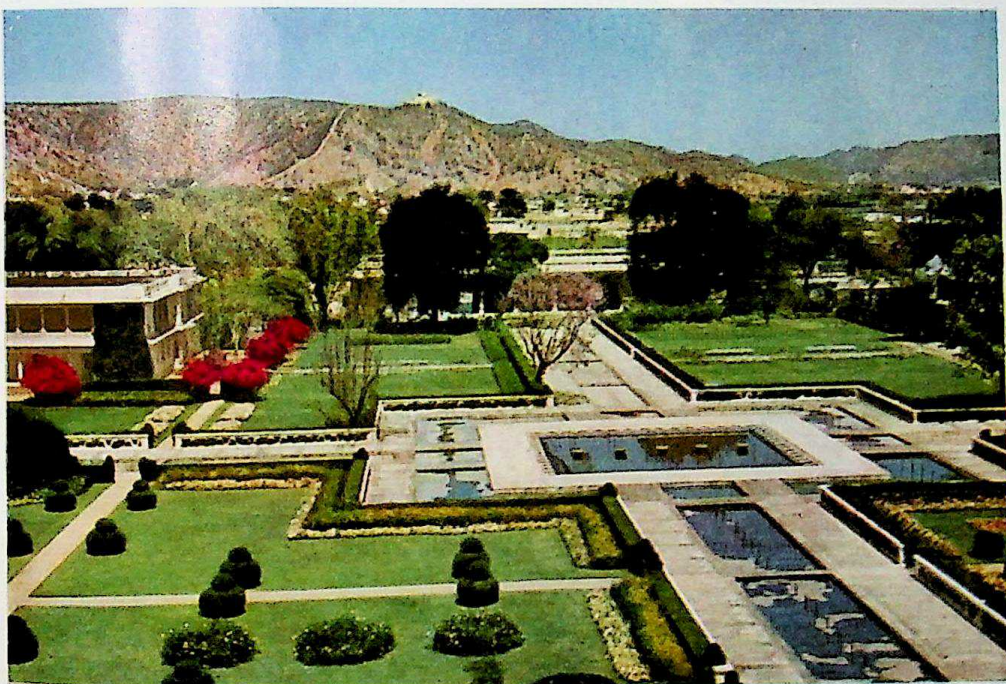
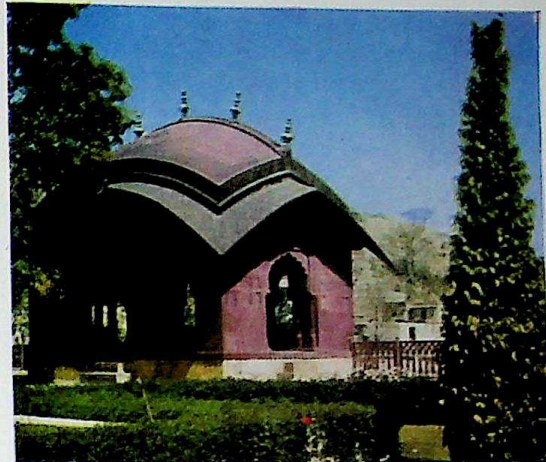
The ponds shone with flights of steps embellished with cat's-eyes and such gems. Raised paths were sprinkled with yellow dust from the stamens of opening flowers. Pavilions and playhouses were in the garden with tile-covered roofs, their walls entirely decorated by the lamjjaka and other creepers . . . resplendently garbed women sprinkled him with saffron coloured water from the fountains." Gardens are also described in Bana's *Kadambari*.

Shalimar is a Sanskrit name, and the gardens of Mughal times use the mandala form. The painters of the Punjab hills and of Rajasthan who often use gardens as the setting for their scenes were steeped in the old literature. Even today a garden like the one at Bundi with its extraordinary swing that lolls outward on





Above: The ivy covered walls of the Pinjor Gardens.
Right: A pavilion in the Amber Palace Gardens, Jaipur.
Below: The City Palace Garden, Jaipur, planned on a Mandala pattern.
Below right: The Pavilion Fountain in Saheli-ki-Badi, Udaipur.



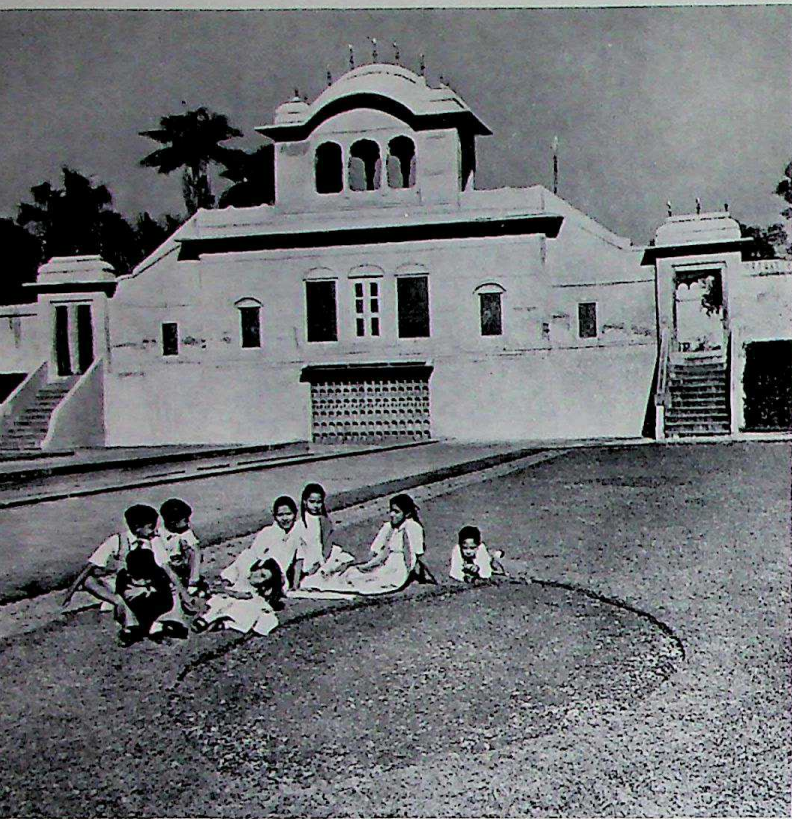
iridescent fountains is true to the tradition outlined in the canonical texts. So is the garden at Pinjor.

The garden at Pinjor, which lies on the Himalayan foothills on the road to Simla, shows with clarity many of the elements of the classic Indian garden. The present garden which dates from the 17th century was built on the ruins of a sixth century temple garden. The garden, like the village in which it is situated, has a natural spring. From the motor road the visitor gets only a fractional glimpse of the crenellated walls that are the rim of the mandala. This is part of the rim of light, but it is mutilated owing to the demolition of the forecourt to make way for the motor road.

The entrance to the garden leads to the first gate which is set in a magnificent stone wall. An arched passageway

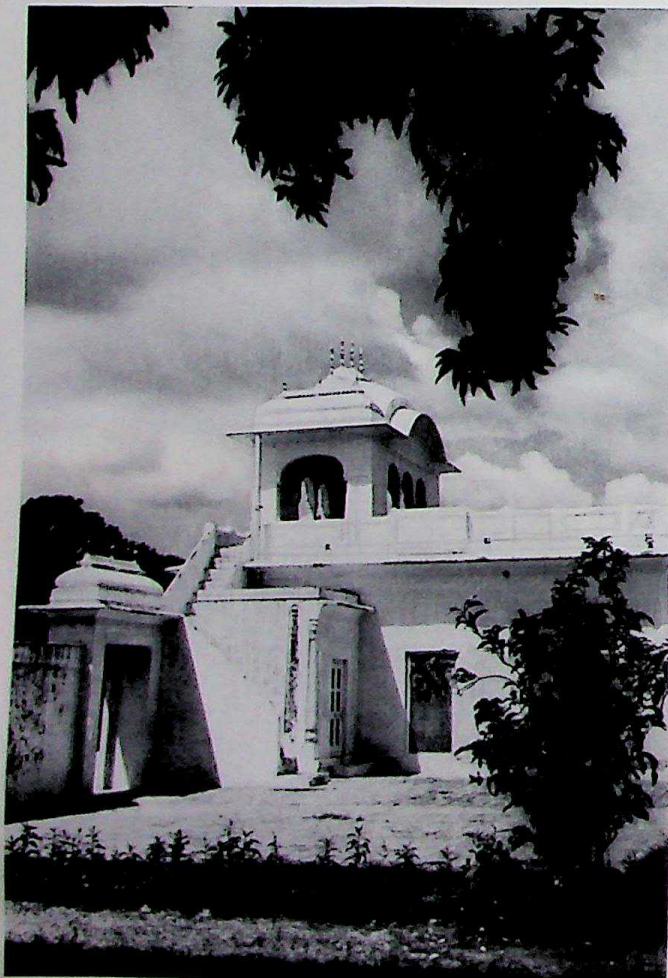
leads into the garden and the first mandala. The view from this spot comprises the sculptured ewer for the natural spring, a stone bench on the first water channel and the first pavilions at the end of the first mandala. On the left begins the pradakshina or circumambulatory path. Paved paths run along all the sides of the rectangle. Past the Triumphant Pot or the Indian cornucopia, the visitor catches a glimpse of the descending terraces or mandalas, each of which is a self-enclosed world.

The building at the first terrace end is called the Shish Mahal; in Sanskrit literature we are told that such buildings were often embellished with rock crystal. The building at Pinjor is set over a water channel which runs under the floor and cools it with a soothing, musical



Above: Second Terrace—Shish Mahal; the pavilion, cascade and water-channel: Pinjor.

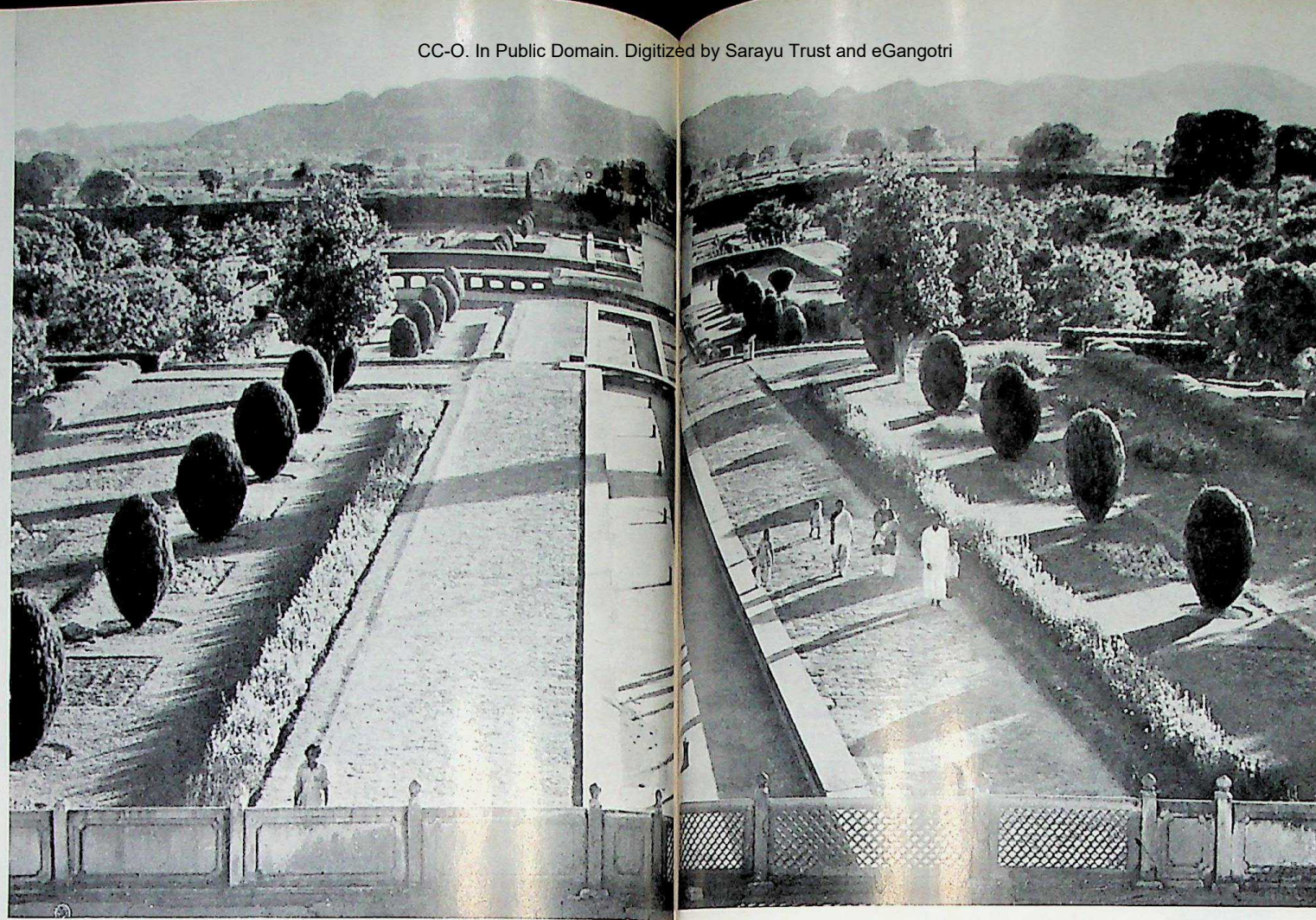
Below: A side view of the above pavilion: Pinjor.



murmur. Frank Lloyd Wright borrowed this device from Pinjor for the house which he named FALLING WATER. Under the waterfall which drops about nine feet, oil *divas* (lamps) in the niches make flickering light. With errant fireflies on a dark night the effect on the sheet of translucent, turquoise water can be magical.

The second terrace which is rather long, with its water channel, ends by delving under the verandah of the second structure. The floor is cut to make a channel for the water which roars down in a high waterfall into a bathing pool on to the third, a narrow, terrace. The structure at the end of the second mandala is called the Rang Mahal. In ancient times it was embellished with frescos or murals. The Rang Mahal at the Pinjor garden has two storeys.

From the waterfall and the bathing pool, two open stairways take the visitor down to the third waterwall. This one, like the fourth on a lower terrace, is set aslant, and the water runs over a surface decorated with carved leaf motifs to make a traditional shawl of foaming water which produces a purring hum. Past the fourth terrace and waterwall with immense grounds and groves on either side the visitor comes to the fifth terrace which is the hub of the garden and the mandala. All the paths and water channels make a conjunction on the Water Palace set in the middle of a lake. This is the Lake of the Mind (Manasarovar). The centre is Meru. Water defines the possibilities of all existence. As the garden is the image of the world, this spot is the axis of the world. When we interiorize this process we truly understand the symbolism of this garden. Even if we wish wholly to disregard the idea of the mandala, we



The lower terraces of the Pinjor Gardens.

cannot do so for it works silently on us and gives the experience of this garden its unique savour.

At Pinjor, as in any Indian garden built on the classic pattern, smooth bare lawns are kept only as counterpoints to lawns with flower-beds. Large trees are planted for shade. Groves are cleverly hidden and offer complete privacy. There are halls of trees and canopies and airy islands of spreading branches. Fruit trees provide points of colour and aromatic scent. At Pinjor there is a wide variety of fruit trees including mango, plantain, jamun, orange, lemon, pomegranate, fig, pear and lichi.

The flower-beds at the Pinjor garden are mathematically designed and flower plants are so massed as to make carpets in single blocks of colour. The flowers comprise roses, jasmines, marigolds, cannas, asters, amaranths, and, of course, lotuses. A few trees are surrounded by raised stone platforms. Those which produce fruit and berries provide food for the birds in the garden. The chirping of birds, the murmur of water and the rustling of leaves all combine to give the visitor to the Pinjor garden a feeling of profound peace.

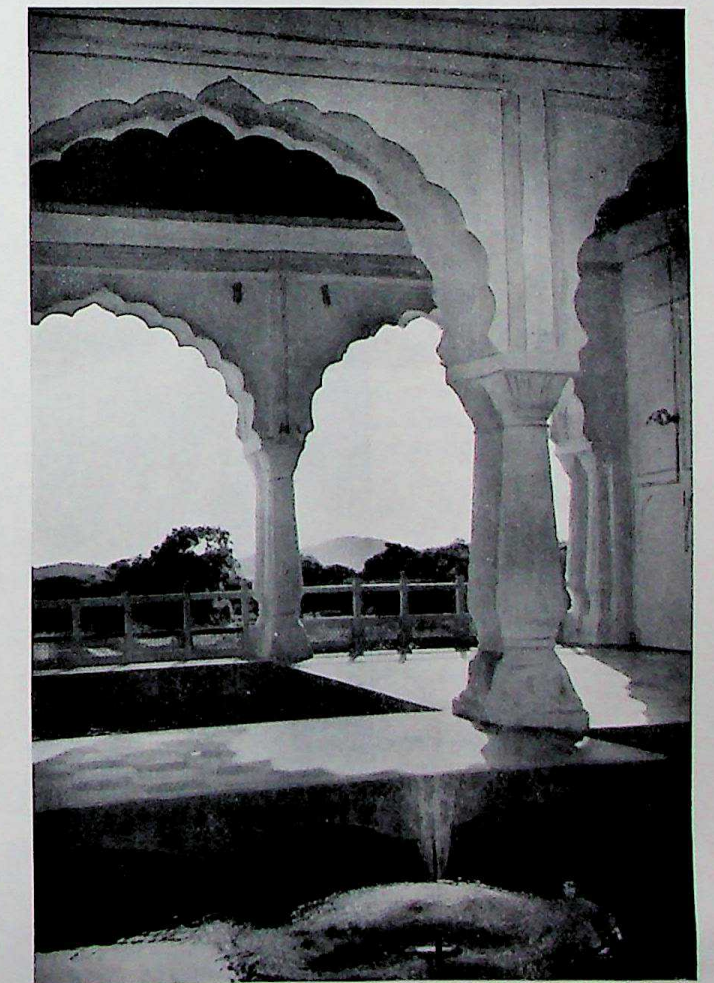
The Pinjor is only one kind of Indian garden based on the mandala. Each variant of the archetype is planned for a specific purpose: the moonlight garden, the swing garden, the pleasure garden, the roof garden and the meditational garden which, together with the temple garden, was adopted by many countries including China, Japan and Korea as a part of Buddhist culture.

The classic Indian garden has not received much attention because of a widespread ignorance of the canonical texts on town-planning. Babur, the first Moghul Emperor, thought the Indians did not know the art of



Above: Rang Mahal at the end of the second terrace: pavilion, cascade and water-channel with fountains: Pinjor.

Below: Interior of the pavilion (above) with the fountain in the foreground.



laying out gardens when he did not find any garden in the Punjab. He forgot that the province had been ravaged by three hundred years of despoliation and war and that gardens were the most perishable of man's creation. To lay out a garden requires not only time and money but a long spell of peace. Of Babur's own garden at Agra not a trace remains today. But both he and his successors were great patrons of gardening and scores of gardens sprang up all over the country during their reign.

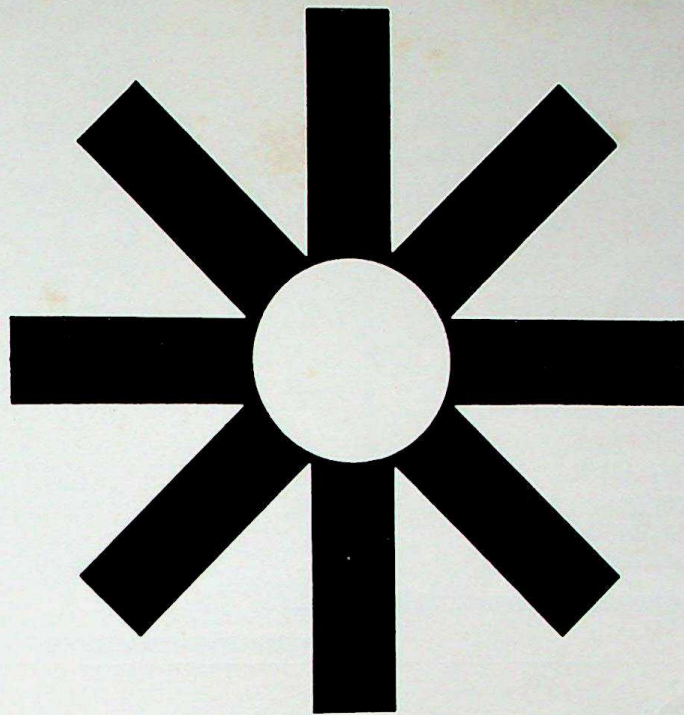
How does the classic Indian garden compare with other gardens in the East? The Chinese garden is like a lovely painted screen against which the visitor moves with charm and elegance. The Japanese garden is a private affair. It collects for the aesthete many diverse elements which are seldom found together in nature. Small rocks and sand are used to create illusions of mountain and beach. The Iranian garden borrows many elements from India but is naturally influenced by local topography. Few realise until they have been to Teheran, Shiraz and other Iranian cities that most of Iran is a desert of salt or of mud and pulverized rock and that there are places in it where not even a lizard can survive. The Iranian cities are thus oases in the wilderness. The Iranian garden partakes of this character. It has all the sensuous charm of an oasis and reflects some of the wonderful colours seen in Iranian tile work.

The Indian garden is an architectural garden. The mandala is the matrix of its design. But its source lies in the ashrama of the Rishis, the forest hermitage of the Vedic seers. Asvaghosh's *Saundarananda* gives us a vivid picture of a typical hermitage. "With its ground which was soft, sandy, smooth yellowish with a sprinkling of *kesar* flowers and unpolluted, it appeared as if covered with body paint, being of unadulterated earthy particles in soft, waxy grains yellowish with a sprinkling of saffron.... They were surrounded by friends, who were pure objects of veneration, holy and promoters of the welfare of others in the shape of lotus ponds. With forest aisles abounding in fruit and flowers it was splendid and flourished like a man who has all the things he needs at his command."

It is the mandala which gives form not only to the palace garden with its pillared *mandapas* and stone terraces and *chhatris* but to the simple and more modest house garden. It is the latter indeed which with its small patch of green and small open air kitchen, set against a high wall or under the shade of a tree, and its paved courtyard made in the 'herringbone' pattern in simulation of running water, which should take the pride of place among Indian gardens. The laying out and the enjoyment of such a garden is, according to an old saying in Sanskrit, "the purest of all pleasures."



A pathway in the Shalimar Gardens, Kashmir.



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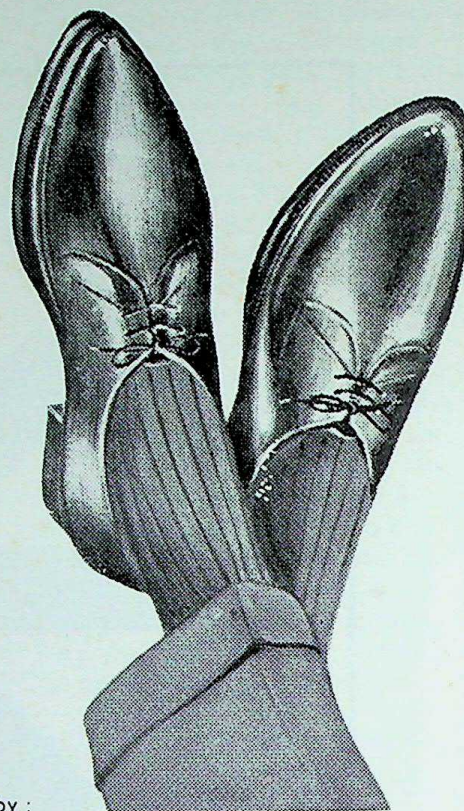
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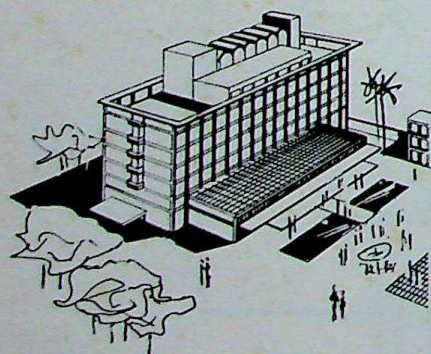
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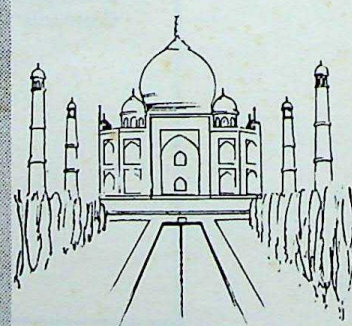
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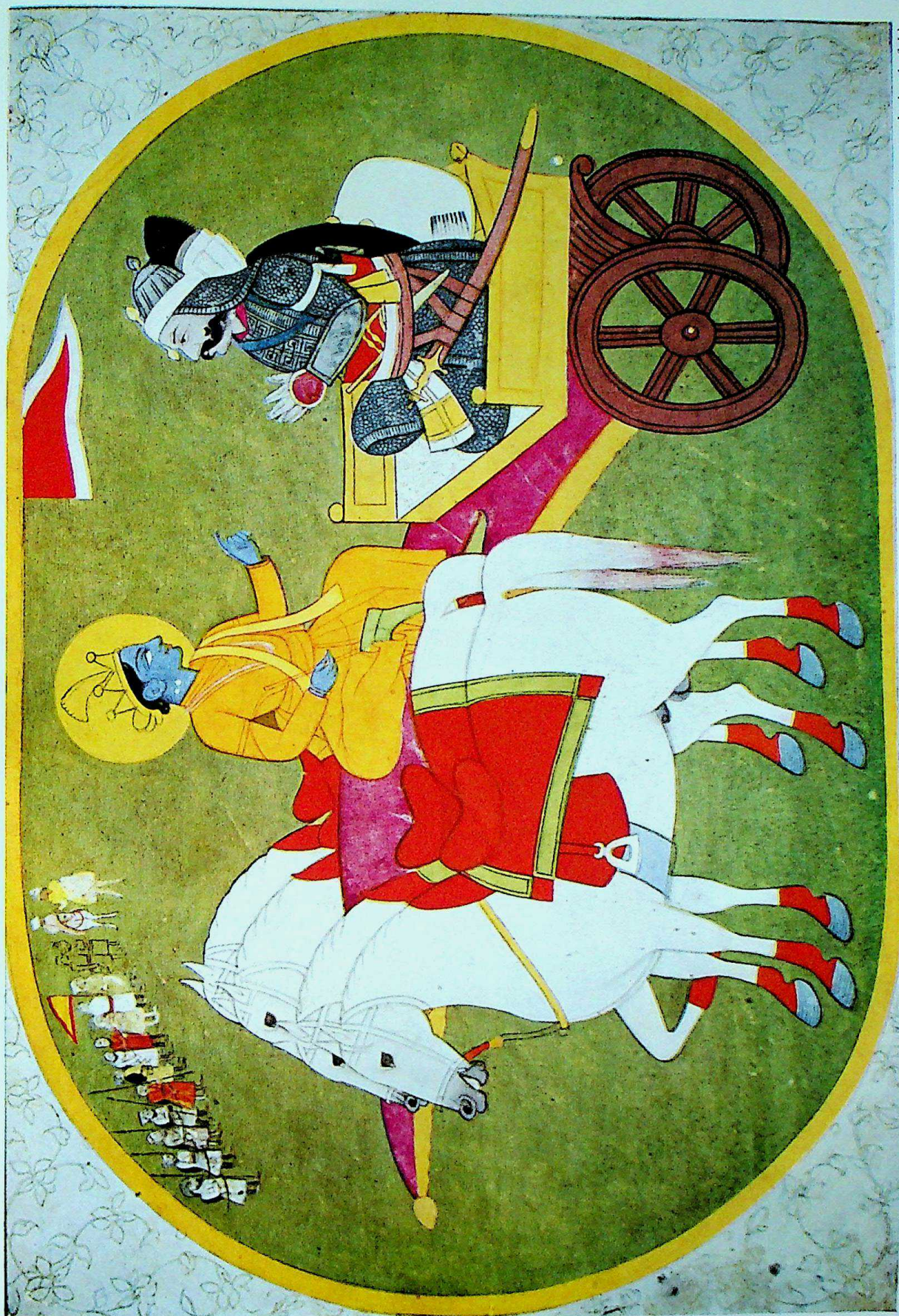
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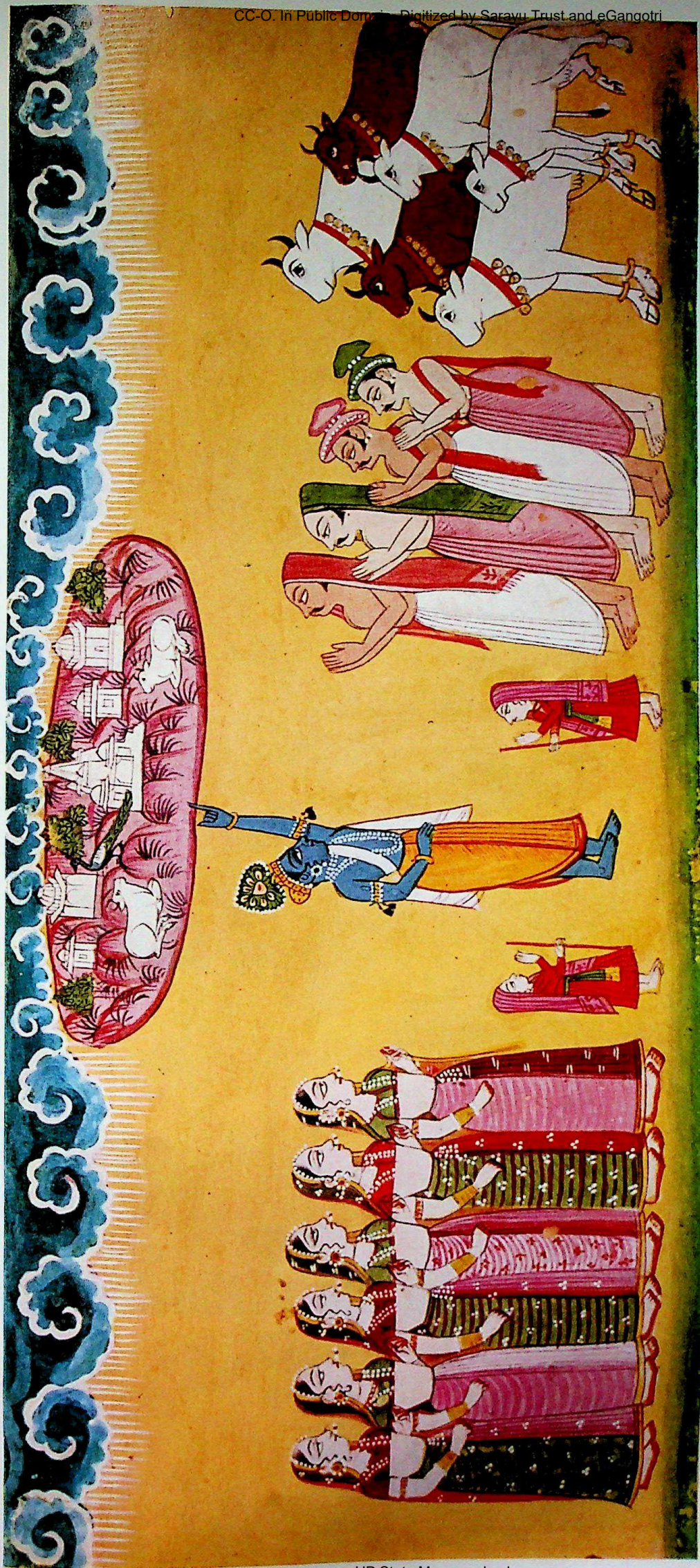
A SET OF
FOUR KRISHNA-LILA PAINTINGS





Krishna expounding Gita to Arjuna on the battle-field.

PLATE I



Krishna holding up Mount Govardhana on his finger-tip.



PLATE III

Krishna playing the flute on the banks of Yamuna.



PLATE IV

Dāna-līlā—Krishna exacting toll tax from Radha.

FOUR



KRISHNA-LILA PAINTINGS

PLATE I

Scenes from the Mahābhārata are as popular with Pahari artists as those from the Ramayana, the classics of Bhakti literature like the Gīta-Govinda or masterpieces of medieval love lore like the Rasikapriyā of Kesavadas and the Sat sa'i of Bihari. Many artists from Chamba, Basohli, Poonch and other places illustrate episodes from the Bhagavad-gītā and the Panchatantra Gītā. The present painting from a late 18th century Pahari school, akin to that of Chamba, depicts a scene from the Bhagavad-gītā. Arjuna in full armour sits in his war chariot which is typical of the 18th century two-wheeled carriage. Opposite him on a tapering seat sits Krishna, the divine charioteer, dressed in yellow. Calmly he explains the meaning of the various forms of Yoga to Arjuna who, racked by doubt, listens to him with folded hands.

PLATE II

In the midst of a violent thunderstorm the frightened cowherds of Gokula rush to Krishna to seek his help. Krishna holds up Mount Govardhana on the tip of a finger as an umbrella to protect them against the fury of the storm. The painting which is reproduced here is in the Marwar style of the 18th century and shows the cowherds with their cows and the Gopis adoring Krishna for the miracle performed by him. The swirling clouds, the plain yellow background and the dress and demeanour of the men and women are in keeping with the folk character of this painting which is typical of the work

produced in Marwar in the last quarter of the 18th century.

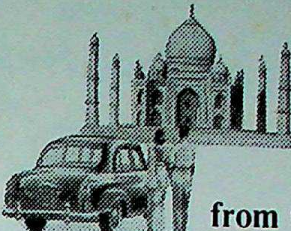
PLATE III

The artists of Bundi, Kotah and Udaipur are very fond of showing Krishna as Muralidhara, playing on the divine flute. In this role he is invariably dressed in a yellow robe with a crown made of peacock feathers on his head and a large garland of flowers round his neck. The painting reproduced here is instinct with lyrical beauty. The flowering lotuses in the Yamuna, the dancing peacocks, the Gopis with their rapt faces and offerings of flowers, all combine to make it a pastoral idyll. In the distance we can see the dream-like cities of Mathura and Vrindavan.

PLATE IV

Krishna is always full of pranks. He stands in ambush and surprises Radha while she is on her way to the river. He poses as a toll tax collector and forces her to part with a portion of the milk she carries in her pitcher. At times he even spills the contents of the pitcher and loves to see her face flushed with anger. Krishna's love-sport with Radha is known as Dāna-līlā. In this beautiful Marwar painting which belongs to the last quarter of the 18th century, Krishna is seen holding Radha's hand in an attempt to exact toll tax from her while she is on her way home after a visit to the Yamuna. The picture has a naive charm peculiar to Marwar paintings of this period.

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NOTES ON 12,000 PAINTINGS BY CHILDREN

By SHIV S. KAPUR



"The children come early, laden with brush, paint, and paper, they fan out over the lawns of a public school, kneeling, squatting, and sprawling, they are given a choice of subjects for different age groups, they use varnish, crayons, water-colour, poster paint, and oils, on paper, cardboard, paste-board, and corrugated packing paper."

Left: A little girl engrossed in her painting. Also see other black and white photographs on the following pages.

THEY say all art is the testing of being: for the child it is also the testing of becoming, of a gradual coming to terms with outward reality, of paint that is first colour and then idea and emotion, of grappling with forms that turn solid under hand and eye, of the growth from joyous fantasy to terror.

The best place to observe child art is perhaps at Shankar's On-the-Spot painting competition, away from the interference of tut-tuting adults. This began over ten years ago. The first time some 200 children upto the age of sixteen years took part, and they rendered their impressions of the world around them in less than a thousand paintings. This year there were 7,000 entrants and over 12,000 paintings.

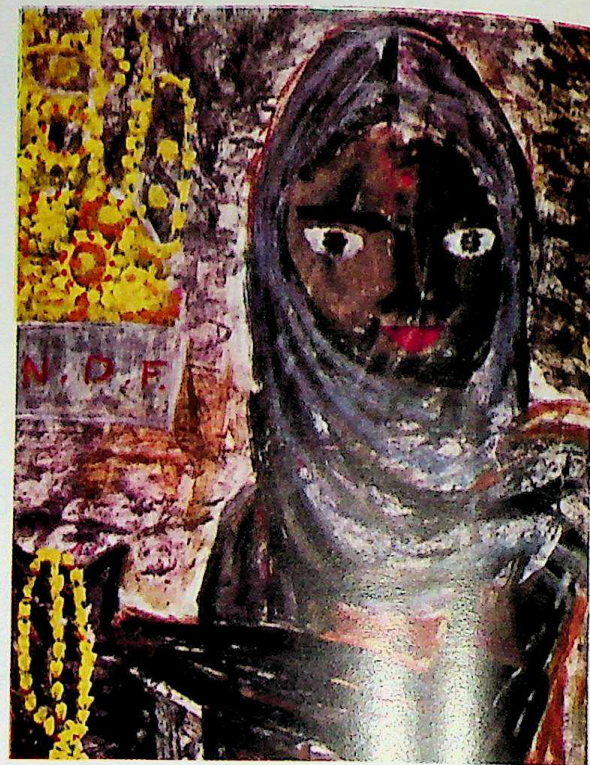
The children come early, laden with brush, paint, and paper, they fan out over the lawns of a public school, kneeling, squatting, and sprawling, they are given a choice of subjects for different age groups, they use varnish, crayons, water-colour, poster paint, and oils, on paper, cardboard, paste-board, and corrugated packing paper. They leave behind them a confusion of paint and paper, and a crop of paintings. These are then gathered, sorted, catalogued, indexed, judged. Awards are given

and the selected paintings set out on a round of exhibitions all over the world.

The children are prolific. Most of them do more than one painting, many several. One five-year-old this year submitted 24 paintings. The younger age groups finish in less than two hours, the older children take more time, attempt more than one subject, offer painterly variations on the same theme, even attempt all the subjects in their age group. The subjects are most intelligently chosen, in three age groups, the youngest, those below five, being left free to paint as they wish. Between them the themes enclose a large segment of the child's world, representing a growth in observation and experience, in awareness and its rendering.

The children in the next group, from five to eight years, are inclined to savour the plasticity of what is before them and, in painting the ice-cream seller or the postman or in rendering their experience of gardening, use the mediation of the emotion that these objects, persons, experiences arouse in them.

For the third group, between eight and twelve years, there is an enlargement of physical experience in themes like the dhobi at work, horse riding, the hair dresser,



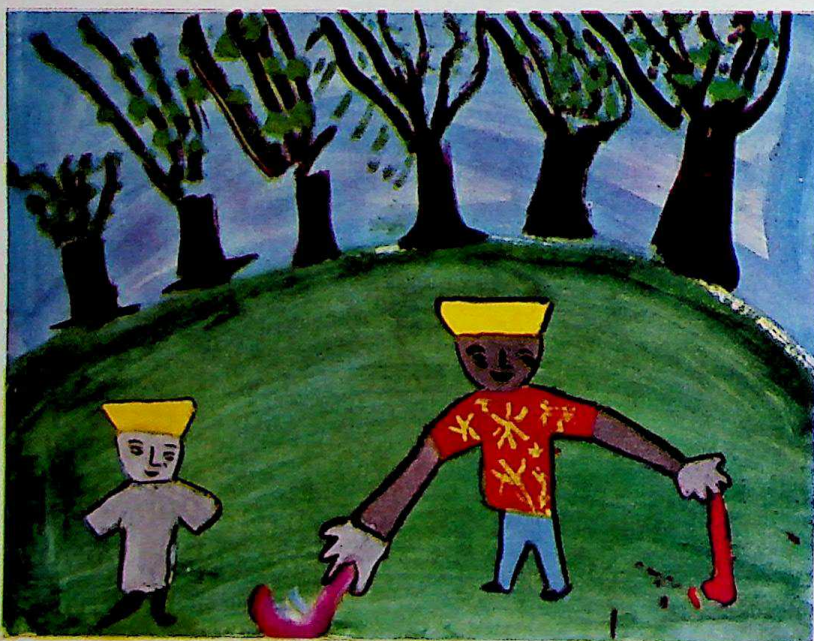
(Left top): "Dhobi at Work"—Indu Goei (age group 8 to 12).

(Left middle): "Gardening"—Awani Khare (age group 5 to 8).

(Left bottom): "School Drill"—Madhu Chandra (age group 8 to 12).

(Above): "India Prepares"—Mridula Krishna (age group 12 to 16).

(Below): "Dhobi"—Praveen Naushad (age group 8 to 12).





school drill, and helping mother. The subjects are more complex and so is the emotion that they evoke. The final group from twelve to sixteen years, is on the borders of adult life. This is a stage of awakening social involvement. Its themes therefore range from the science laboratory to Prime Minister Nehru addressing the people, craftsmen at work, collection of funds, the defence effort, and freedom from starvation.

In this process of growth in and through painting what engages one's attention first is the materials and the manner of using them. There is complete spontaneity here, a lack of inhibition. Participating children from one school show a fondness for varnish. They spread it on thick and fast and then work designs upon it with knife and fingernail. The younger ones use crayons, others water-colour and poster paints, some oils. Colour, in the beginning, is an emotion in itself, complete and satisfying. Then forms begin to emerge, flat and doll-like. These are ideas of persons, places, and things, not full representations but characteristic ones only, indicating an eye not yet fully turned outward. A personal censor seems to be at work behind that eye. It remembers by individual idiosyncrasy. There is pre-selection in viewing, a kind of humour underlies everything viewed, an expressed and general delight.

What comes next, around the age of nine, is the capacity to observe and render inter-relations. Instead of mostly single objects we now have groups, static or in motion. The forms however largely continue to be flat, as though, finally, they remained ideas and were not yet rounded into corporeal reality. There is, however, a conscious effort at design and harmony, with colour as the binding cement.

It is in the oldest group that the outside adult world is allowed some entry into the child's awareness. It comes as a world in its own mostly rough right, no longer sieved and flattened. It is less simplified. It does not have the doll for its formal reference. From the general the ideas turn specific, the observed world gathers its third dimension, and rouses complex emotional responses. There is awareness, and delineation, of form as form, and the colour, now in chiaroscuro, becomes a means of expressing the fusion of idea, feeling, and physical reality. The child in the artist is ready for the rough and tumble of life. Later, he may withdraw, as an artist become a child again, in sensibility and imagination, but he would have been marked by pain, and there is no return to innocence.

But, to run this thread of inquiry through different age groups, from one child to another, there are this year's subjects and the way they have been treated. To the youngest, the subject matters nothing; they enjoy colour, sometimes painting the ice-cream seller in imitation of their elders. The second group, from five to eight years, are fascinated by the ice-cream seller. They make large ice-cream trollies and label them with their favourite brand. For choice, they could paint a music lesson but

(Top): Young ones absorbed in their creative work.

(Middle in colour) — "India Prepares" — M. L. Kapur (age group 12 to 16).

(Bottom): Girls of older age group intent, on their work, some are thoughtfully pausing before a brush stroke.

only a couple do; or the postman, who is mostly identified by a letter-box; or reading a book which is clearly a chore but evokes two delightful entries, one of them a girl in red with stiff pigtails and a book entitled "A Girl" also in red.

One would think telephoning as a subject would be popular in a sophisticated town like Delhi. It is not. The young ones seem content to leave it to their teenage brothers and sisters, except one young lady seen pertly at the telephone. Of gardening there are a few pint-size views. In one of them there is a tall leafy burgeon of trees. In another a tough-looking mali complete with the instruments of his trade dominates some flowering plants in the background, clearly the creator of a garden and its fearsome protector.

The dhobi at work draws the maximum interest from the eight-to-twelve-year olds. We have him, in an evocation of vigorous simplicity, as a solid figure, mustachioed and colourful, pillared upon his legs in a swirl of water. Other treatments of the same subject are more complex, the best of them a construction that gives him a grey stream in front, a helper ironing on the side, a taut but unburdened clothes-line, the clothes themselves in an attractive surrounding mosaic of colour: idea and representation together. The hairdresser, another regular experience, is pictured busily at work, with many assistants. The experience obviously has its tedium in the waiting figures, and lacks the sympathy and colour of the dhobi.

The school drill, again, offers extremes of treatment. In general the pattern is externally imposed and the movement, in a repetitive group, is necessarily simplified. Most entries therefore show doll-like figures, spread-eagled. In the best of them however a new capacity becomes apparent. This is the capacity to move away from pictorial representation, to invent an image and make it valid. One painting suggests green space enclosed by two segments of crowd and, in that space, vigorously active figures. Another turns the figures into five panels, in an upward extending diminuendo, all of them interlocked in rhythmic movement, making a single design of attractive complexity.

The child is now ready to enter the adult world in certain of its areas, to seek significance in a new pattern of experience. Many of the best paintings in the twelve-to-sixteen age group concern subjects of social involvement. The defence effort, first aid, NCC parade, collection of funds, the Prime Minister addressing the people, and freedom from starvation are themes that make up the climate of growing maturity for the child. The experience of the themes is essentially general, and would not be unique unless its view and feeling are made personal. Also, it would be difficult to extract from them a clearly planted artistic image. In the midst of this active tumult, only the theme of craftsmen at work offers serenity, and is immediately popular.

The nature of the new challenge is clear from the distribution of awards. Of the five top awards in 1963, four went to those over fifteen, one to a fourteen-year-old, and none to those between twelve and fourteen. Again, two of the award winning paintings concerned freedom from starvation, one had the defence effort for theme, two showed craftsmen at work. As a whole the adult, or near-adult world is here, with its own nature of comment and expression.



(Top): "Craftsmen at Work" — Madhoor Roy Kapoor (age group 12 to 16).

(Top right on opposite page): "Craftsmen at Work" — Sarejani Sathaye (age group 12 to 16).

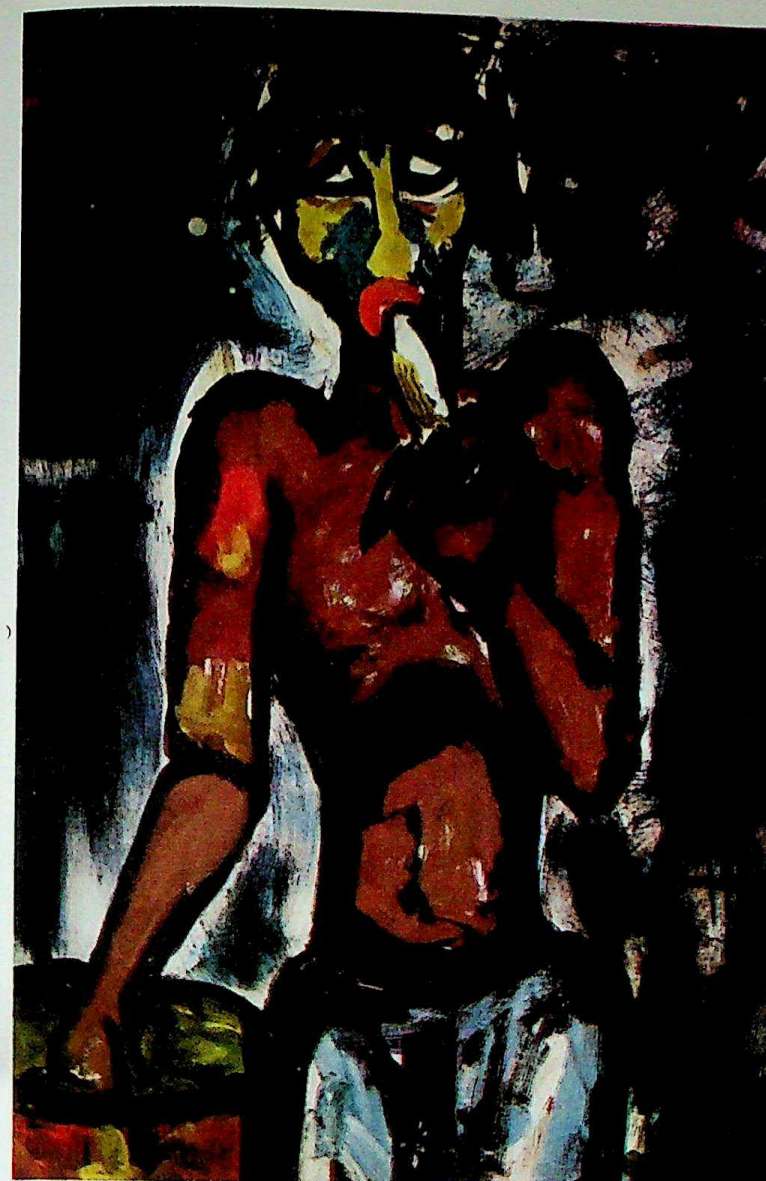
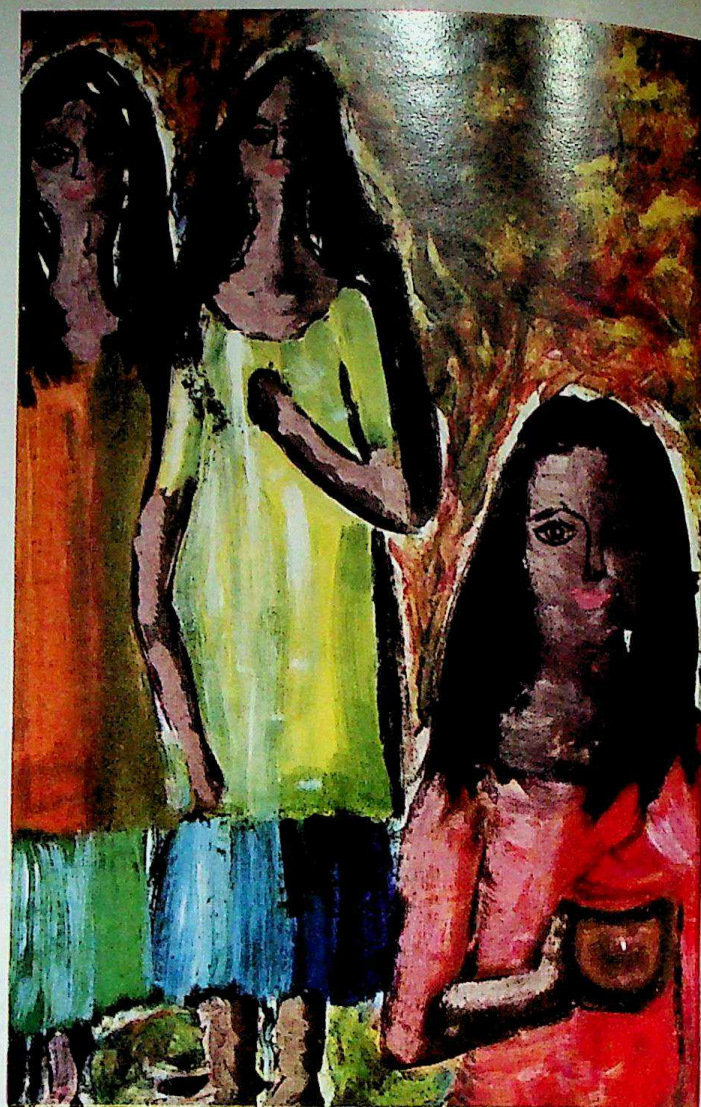
Above: "Telephoning" — Manjula Bhatnagar (age group 5 to 8).

(Middle on opposite page): "Craftsmen at Work" — Jayant Kumar Guha (age group 12 to 16).

(Bottom on opposite page): "Craftsmen at Work" — Usha Gade (age group 12 to 16).

The photograph in black and white in the centre — A girl absorbed in her work.





In treatment, there is a closer approach to realistic representation. The drawing is now firm, there is realisation of contour in relation to mass, perspective appears. There is a desire to make a definite statement in line and colour, and the ability to do so. The best of the paintings in this group are characterised by boldness of design and a firm swirling line, comment on the free cultural climate in the country as a whole. Subjective feeling appears in large units of design. It is as though the child would match the large themes with new found strength of feeling. The typical figure, which had stayed with us in the work of younger children, now recedes though it does not disappear altogether. The total approach is less formalistic than that of the adult, there is a dominance of idea, colour is used to render mood.

Craftsmen at work are mostly potters. The feel of clay is something the child still carries in his fingers. The potter is the image maker; his creative figure is viewed with sympathy. From a direct representation of the potter and his pots evolves a sense of essential form. In one attractive painting this makes the potter one with his pots in a repeated browning rotundity. We have the dry brush at work in another painting, with suggested forms seen remotely; in a third the statement is clear, in glowing colours, showing a couple making toys. A divisionist composition in black and brown, in its configuration and



On opposite page.

(Top left): "Funds for Charity" — Sujata Bhowmik (age group 12 to 16).

(Top right): "Freedom from Starvation" — Asha Khanna (age group 12 to 16).

(Bottom): "Freedom from Starvation" — Madhoor Kapur (age group 12 to 16).

On this page (Top left): "Freedom from Starvation" — Satish Gupta (age group 12 to 16).

(Top right): "Reading a Book" — Ranjanbala (age group 8 to 12).

(Right): The rows and rows of young painters at their work.



treatment, is frankly inspired by M. F. Husain but does not suffer from that inspiration.

Originality is seen to be at work in the handling of large groups. The crowds listening to the Prime Minister are massed, faceless stumps of colour, in a harmonic notation that rejects individuality. The collection of funds evokes a street corner viewed from the top. This has the rigid lines of houses enclosing an urgently moving group down below, collection box in hand, and a curling tree in a corner spangled softly with flowers.

The defence effort ranges from a large darkly drawn half-figure of a woman, relieved by a glint of gold-yellow ornaments, to tanks moving on the road like outsize turtles, or belching brown-red puffs of shells at snow-white mountain peaks. In vaguely active groups of people identification of purpose is a problem. This is got over through careful composition which includes placards as

dividers. First aid has an air of menace about it; blood donation is a sombre mass of elongated figures.

Freedom from starvation could and does evoke melodrama. At its best however it also evokes a rare restraint. Emotion is not clangorous; a central sense of repose remains. A common element in the rendering of freedom from starvation is a mute accusation. Two of the best paintings are groups, with a tight economy of stroke and composition. They carry about them a questioning stillness. The most impressive rendering of the theme is in a large painting, second in a series of two done by the same child. The dark swirl of colour in this one, relieved by flickering yellow and orange, is a triumph of feeling. There is a bare figure at the centre, banana at the mouth, eyes haunted, nose and mouth, in jabs of paint, twisted in an anguish of hunger. We have pity here and, with that, the coming of man.

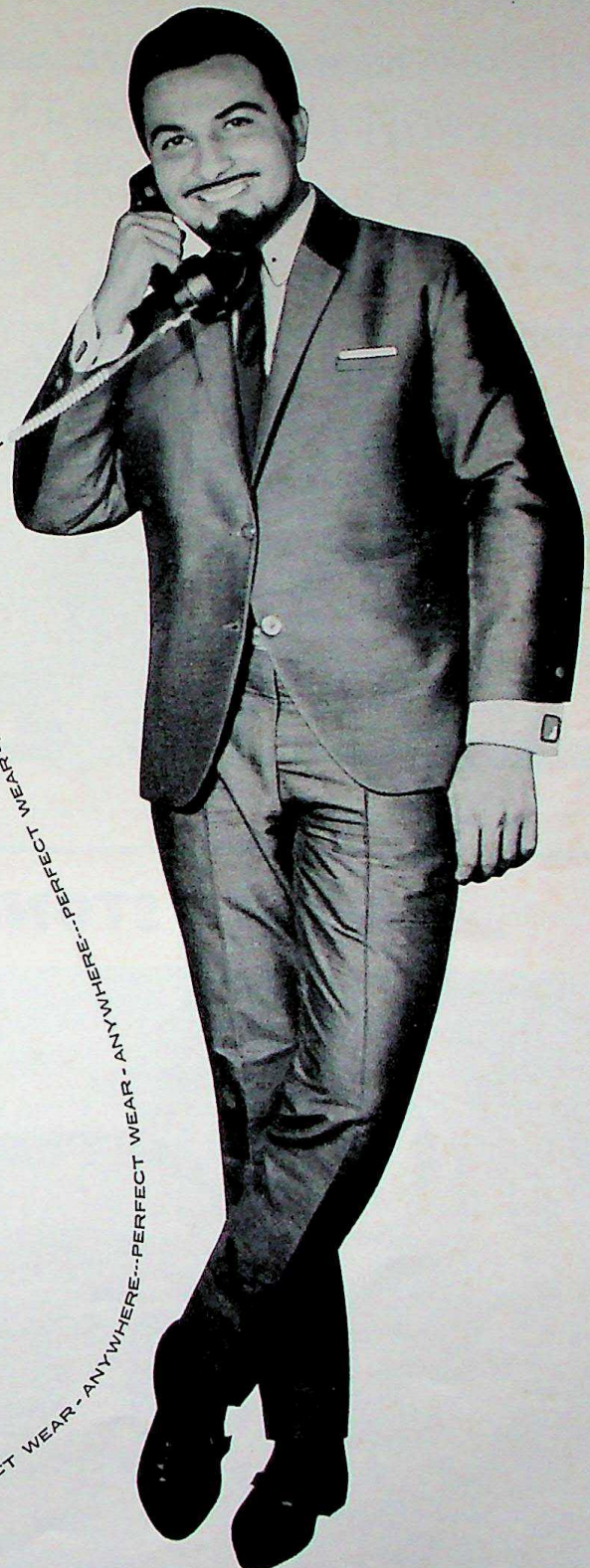


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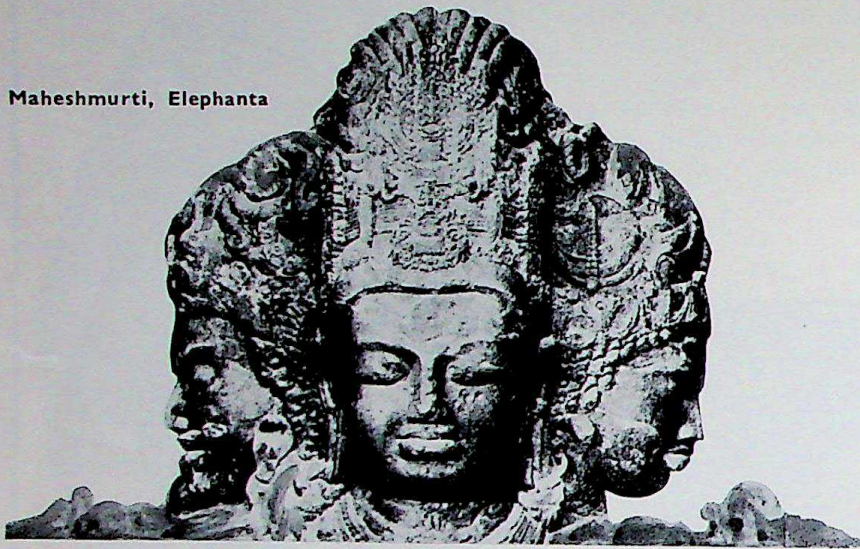
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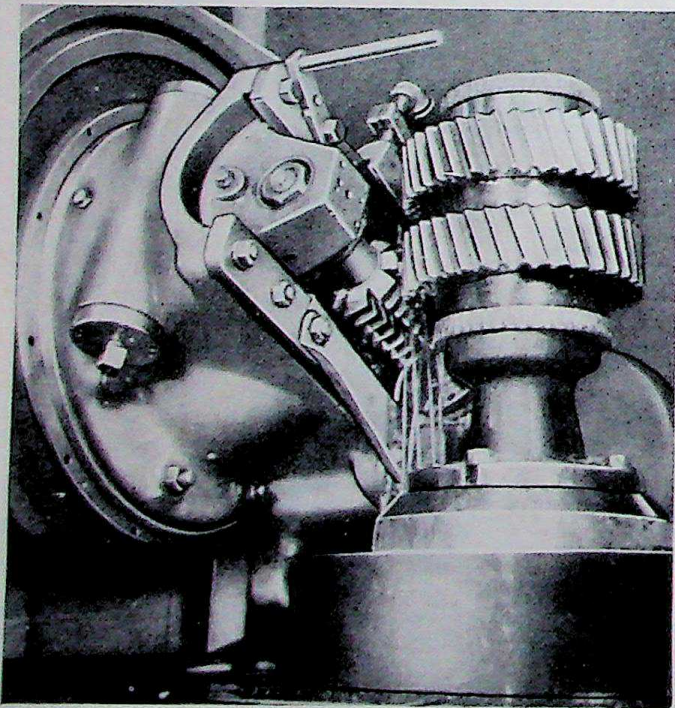
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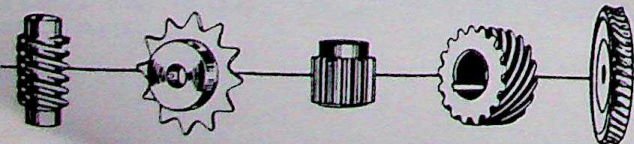
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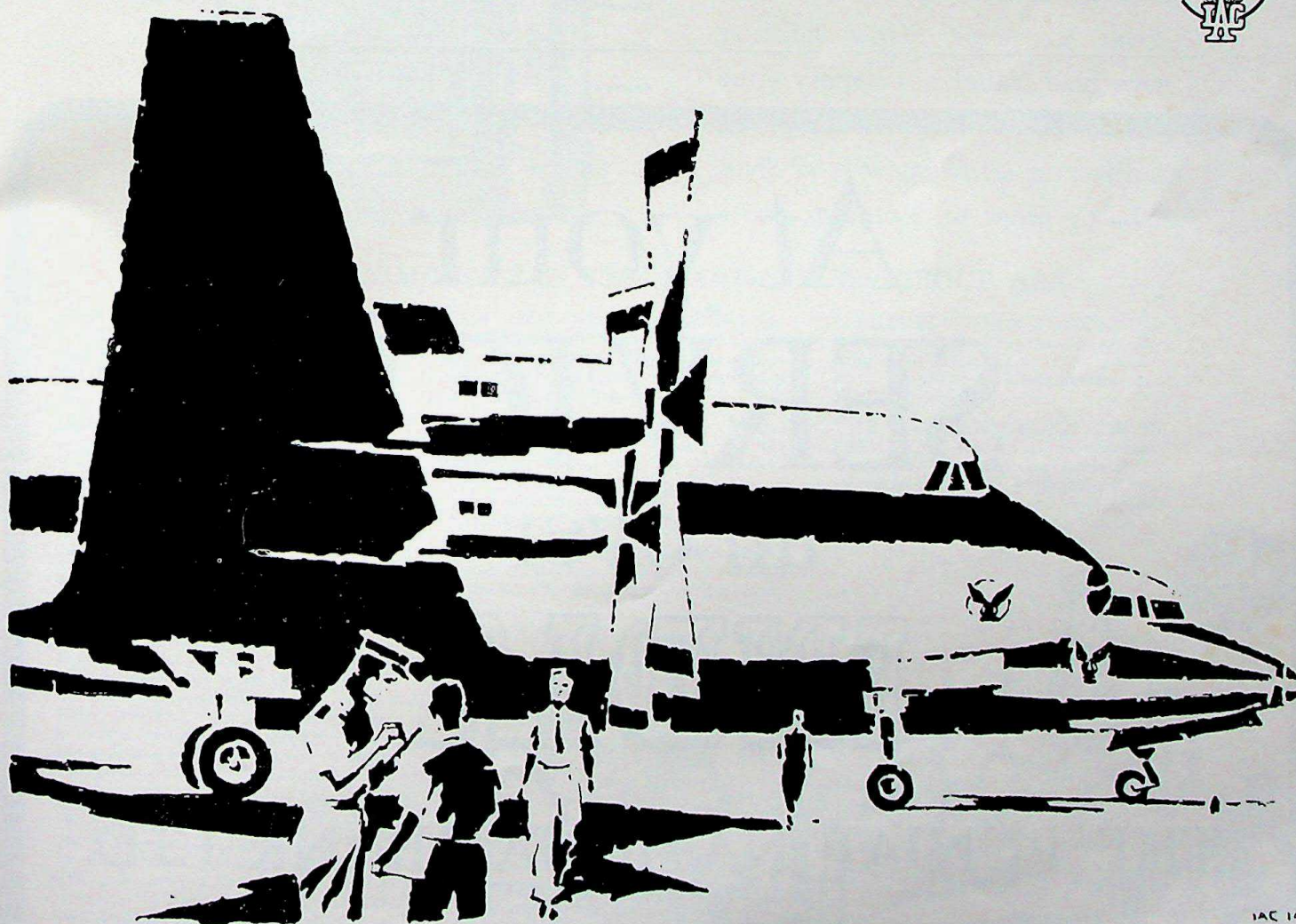
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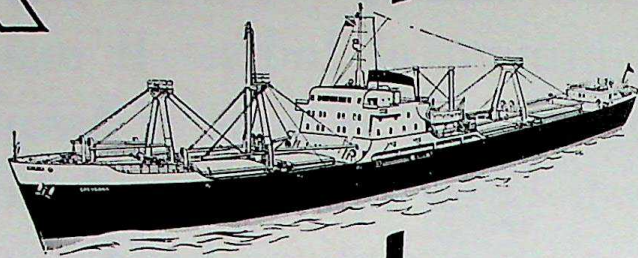
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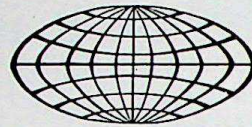
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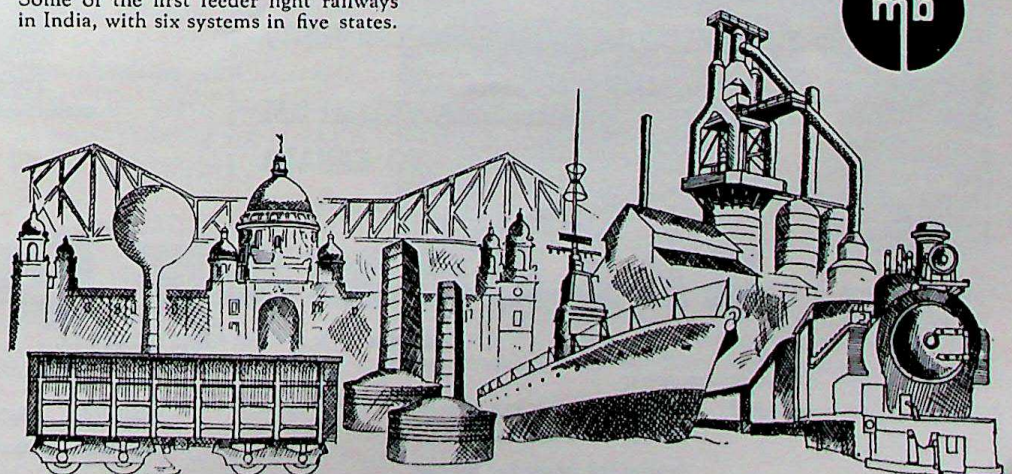
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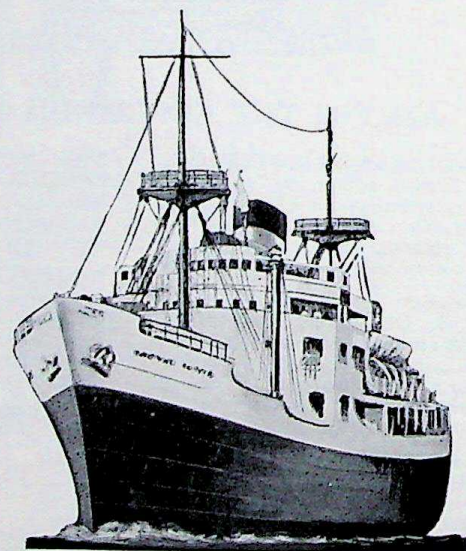
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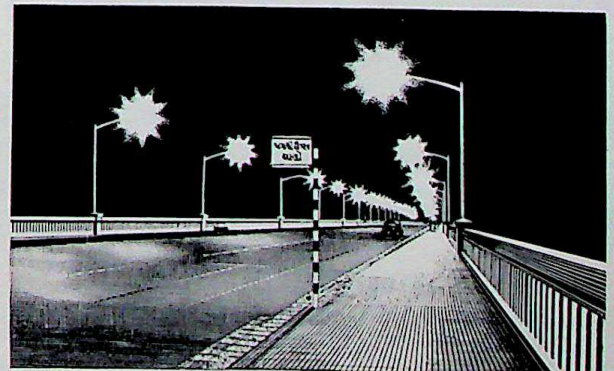


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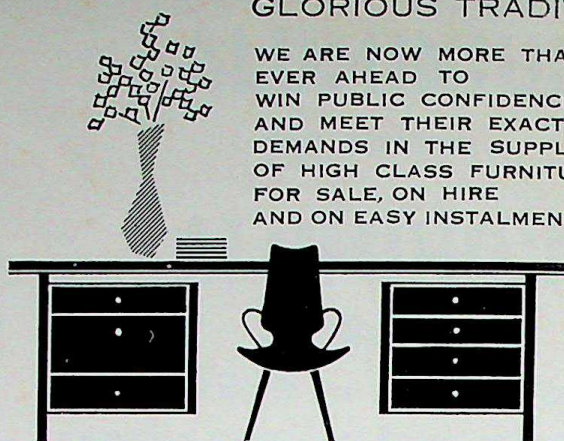
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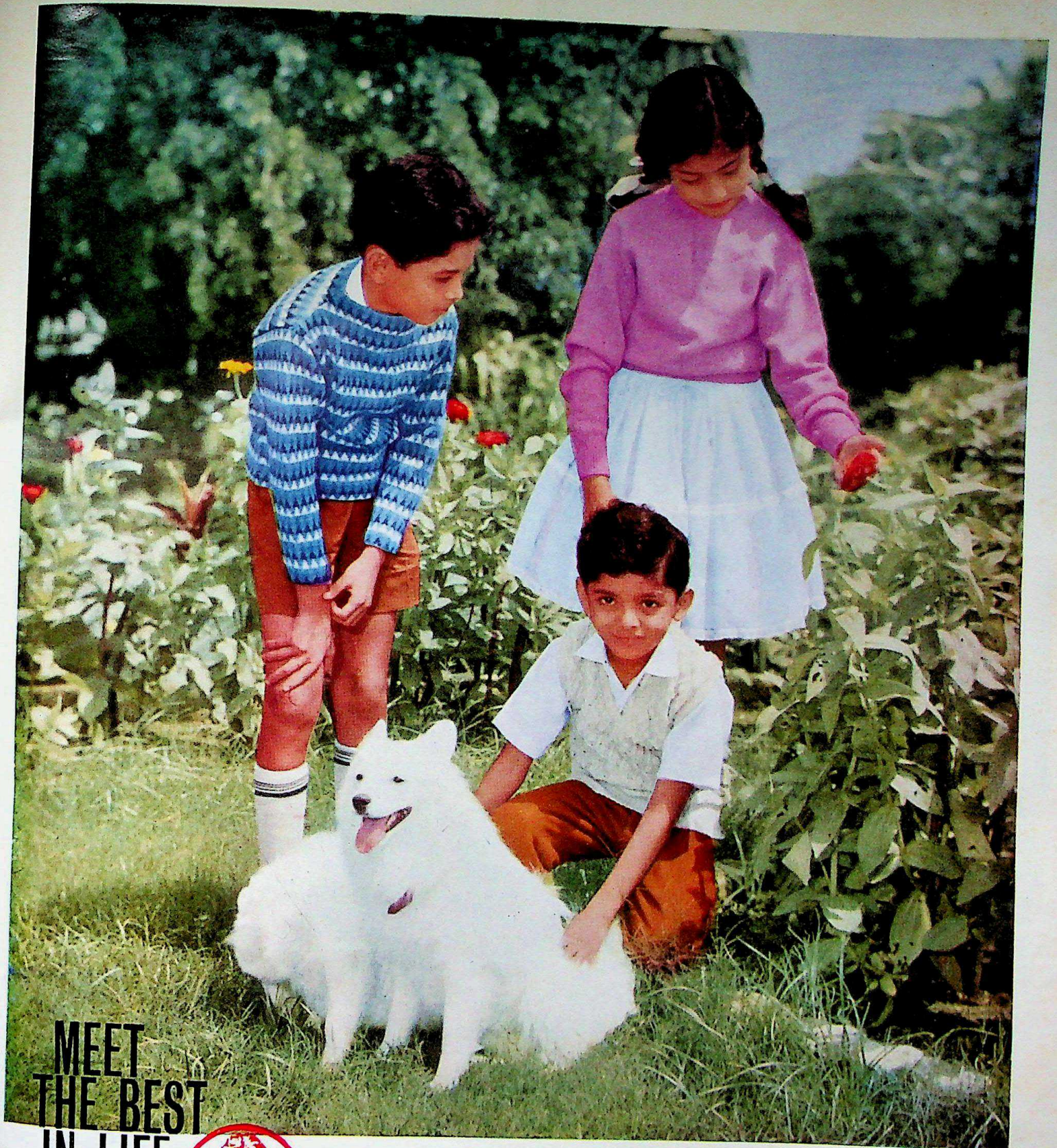
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